

Akhand Jyoti is not merely a magazine. It is an incarnate embodiment of my soul. - Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

Akhand Jyoti

The light divine

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॥Om bhūrbhuvah svaḥ tatsaviturvareṇyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt ॥
(May Almighty illuminate our intellect and inspire us towards the righteous path)

- Rigveda 3/62/10; Samveda 1462, Yajurveda 3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/3



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Amrit Chintan

The Guiding Spirit of Noble Thoughts

All along our lives, as we grow older, we go on learning from our pleasant or unpleasant experiences. If we solely depend on these personal experiences, it will take too long to grasp the true essence of life. We should, therefore, study the noble thoughts of illumined souls, which augment knowledge, enlighten the mind and help purifying the character. We should assimilate the uplifting tips inherent in them and imbibe them in our lives. In this way, we can take advantage of the rich experiences of great seers and sages who have guided mankind onto the path of peace, progress and prosperity. Here, it is not meant that we should blindly follow what they have said. We should thoroughly analyze the ideas propounded by them with logical reasoning; and imbibe the ones which inspire the core of our souls. This would help us a lot in enlightening our path to the chosen goal.

- Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

[India has a rich heritage of Gurus (spiritual teachers), who have done considerable Tapa (ascetic endeavor) to simplify the way for common men and women to attain peace, happiness and harmony in life. On the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, we are sharing their wisdom in the form of quotes on all the text pages of this issue. - Editor]

On the Auspicious Parva of 'Guru Purnima' (July 19, 2016)

'Akhand Jyoti – The Light Divine' - Editorial Team

Salute Our Teacher and Founder – Patron

Revered Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

If you desire ease, forsake learning. If you desire learning, forsake ease. How can the man at his ease acquire knowledge, and how can the earnest student enjoy ease? – *Nagarjuna*

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**You can only stop the flow of thoughts by refusing to have any
interest in it. - Ramana Maharshi**

Let's Awaken the Youth

As spring is the most vibrant and verdant amongst the seasons, so is youth in the changing phases of life - a fountainhead of joy, enthusiasm, valor and courage. Self-disciplined youth committed to noble ideals are a source of inexhaustible energy leading to ever higher progress and prosperity. History bears testimony to the fact that youth have always established new benchmarks with their wisdom, courage, indomitable energy and strong willpower - be it the domain of materialism or spirituality. Indeed, whatever bright chapters are found in the history of the world, they have been written by the youth.

It is the youthful divine urge of *Ekoham bahusyam* that created the whole cosmos. The youthfulness of Nature is expressed in the form of its beauty. The youth, Ram, painfully moved by the cultural degradation of his time vowed - '*Nishichar heen karahu mahi*' (meaning: I vow to eliminate all evil traits from the face of the earth). When the youthful message of the Gita aroused from within youth Partha (Arjun), the latter won the great war of Mahabharat. The youthfulness of human compassion transformed prince Siddhartha into The Buddha. The youthfulness of Guru Gobind Singh became a challenge for the tyrants. When youth get surcharged by *Tapa* (penance), they become Bhagwan Mahavir, Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekanand, Swami Ramteerth, etc. It is the youthfulness of the martyrs which broke the chains of slavery of Mother India. The youthfulness of Param Poojya Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya and Vandaniya Mataji laid the foundation of Gayatri Mission - committed to ushering of the New Golden Era. Youth is the passionate urge to grow both in matters mundane as well as spiritual.

Unfortunately, at present we are passing through a dark period of cultural debauchery. Materialistic consumerism and self-indulgence are on their climax; and directionlessness, evil tendencies and lack of creativity are making our young generation hollow from within. Over and above that unemployment, drug abuse, and western style of living are draining off their energies. In such a dismal situation, it becomes essential to acquaint the youth of our nation with our cultural heritage and make them realize the true purpose of their lives. What is needed for a bright future in the twenty-first century - is the total transformation of the present way of life - from crass materialism to life-affirming spirituality.

Never say NO, Never say, 'I cannot', for you are INFINITE. All the power is WITHIN you. You can do anything. - Swami Vivekananda

In order to organize the youth into the nation's enlightened power, Shantikunj has initiated a nation-wide 'Youth Movement'. It aims at making the youth healthy, serene, empathetic and self-reliant. The program for achieving this four-fold objective is as follows:

1. Motivation of youth for achieving holistic physical, mental and spiritual health; cultivation of a superior art of living through Pragma Yoga and self-discipline; protecting the youth from the vices of addiction / drug abuse and engaging them in creative work
2. Protecting the youth from the ill-effects of consumeristic culture and acquaint them with our glorious cultural heritage; cultivation of virtues like humility, cooperation, industriousness, self-discipline, etc; amongst the youth
3. Development of empathy, sensitivity, devotion to social service and related qualities in the youth; utilization of time, effort, resources and talents of youth in creative work
4. Awakening of self-respect through self-reliance; eradication of unemployment; self-reliance through self-employment; and awakening of an attitude of dignity towards work

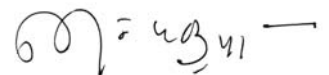
In order to solve the present-day problems and lead this process of transformation, the nation is seeking the support of youth. In fact the future of the nation lies in the hands of its youth. Thus, there is a dire need of organizing the youth and properly channelizing their talents and potentialities.

The progress of any nation does not depend on its vast majority of unorganized masses but on its energetic, service-oriented young leaders. True leaders are those who could solve their own problems and utilize the remaining energy in the upliftment of others. Only such leaders will inspire the masses to follow them.

Therefore, under the aegis of All World Gayatri Pariwar, with its headquarters at Shantikunj Hardwar, a 'Youth Cell' has been established. This cell is striving to organize dedicated and energetic young men and women from all walks of life, ready to participate enthusiastically in the upliftment and the development of the nation. This cell will work at ascending levels starting from village/town to the state.

We appeal to all our fellow citizens to cooperate with us in this campaign of awakening of the youth so that this vibrant, energetic and dynamic force could be utilized for the development of the Nation and the welfare of the world at large.

With Prayer-filled Wishes for Guru Purnima Parva,



(Pranav Pandya)

It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. – The Buddha

Conscientious Time Management

Every moment of life is precious. Time is the essence of life. It is the wealth given to us by Nature. Everyday all of us get 24 hours; nothing less, nothing more. Now, it is up to us how we use it. People who know how to make the best use of every moment easily open the doors of success in their lives; and those who misuse time keep suffering the ignominy of failures one after the other. There is a saying that “spent time and spent words cannot come back”. Everybody is tied by the limits of time; even God respects the boundaries of time.

Work wins appreciation only when it gets completed in a requisite time frame. Beyond the time allotted, work loses all its utility however good may have been its quality. Just as falling of rains after the crops have dried up have no use; likewise, when the time is past the deadline the work loses its importance and value. When iron is hot it can be cast into whichever shape we want. Once it gets cold nothing can be made out of it, however much we may beat the same. In the same way, a person who has learnt to wisely harness his time and has understood how to cast himself according to the need of the time has actually learnt the true mantra of life.

Shakespeare wrote in one of his plays “I wasted time, and now doth time waste me”. It is true that a person who wastes even a little

bit of time loses wonderful opportunities that he could have otherwise availed of by utilizing that time. All the great leaders have one thing in common. They wisely utilize every moment of their lives. When other people are busy squandering away time in self-indulgence and laziness, great men are busy conceptualizing plans for the future. There is no person in history who squandered away his time and still managed to achieve greatness.

Therefore, there is a dire need to manage time wisely. “Conscientious Time Management” refers to meticulous planning of time and sincere execution of this plan. This is the only mantra to attain success in any endeavor. A simple change in outlook and some modification in one’s daily routine can result in a big leap forward towards greater achievements. We discuss below a few simple methods for managing one’s time efficiently.

First of all, one needs to set one’s goal of life or that for the near future or at least for the week or even the day. This goal setting is essential to managing one’s time well, because goal gives a destination and vision to work toward. Accordingly, one can manage one’s priorities, time, and resources to get there. So if you have not yet set the goal, it’s time for setting one.

Life is ‘time’; those who love life should not squander it in laziness. – Pt. Shriram Sharma, Acharya

Secondly, one should prioritize one's tasks. It not only increases our efficiency in work, but also gives us the dexterity of finishing the work on time. When we are not able to clearly comprehend which task should be done first and which later, we end up finishing unimportant tasks first. The important tasks which remain incomplete cause us embarrassment and we have to pay for them in one form or the other. While ascribing priorities we must take special care to find out which are the urgent tasks which should be completed immediately. Next, we must take up tasks which are important and whose deadlines are drawing near; and so on.

Thirdly, one should not procrastinate. When we put off tasks that we should be focusing on right now, we feel guilty that we haven't started; we come to dread doing the task; and, eventually, dejection and disappointment overpowers us when we fail to complete the work on time.

"Time is an equal opportunity employer. Each human being has exactly the same number of hours and minutes every day. Rich people can't buy more hours. Scientists can't invent new minutes. And you can't save time to spend it on another day. Even so, time is amazingly fair and forgiving. No matter how much time you've wasted in the past, you still have an entire tomorrow."

- Denis Waitley

Fourthly, one must be realistic in taking up the task. Many a time, we are unable to assess how much time is needed to finish a particular task. This improper assessment also affects its timely completion. Sometimes we agree to take up tasks beyond our capability and then are not able to devote sufficient time for it. This results in failure of timely completion of the task. Therefore, before taking up any task, we must assess the time and effort required for the completion of work.

Lastly, we must make a 'to-do' list of all the tasks we have on hand. If some tasks have to be taken up in the morning, then its plan should be made the previous night itself and work on it must start as the first thing in the morning. This would save time and there would be no undue haste while finishing the task. Prior to taking up the task, we must clearly know whether we are adequately equipped for it or not. We must assess whether requisite expertise is with us or not. If we do not know the way to complete the task, then it would take us time to develop expertise and then do it. In the tasks that we have the expertise we take much less time to finish. While making the plan we must bear this in mind that for the tasks that we will take up for the first time, we must assign more time and for the other tasks in practice, realistic time frames should be assigned.

Time management is an art, which like other arts gets perfected by continuous practice. If we follow the guidelines given above wholeheartedly then we will be able to achieve real success, not just in one sphere but in all spheres of life. We will be able to learn the true Art of Living.

We should not fret for what is past, nor should we be anxious about the future; men of discernment deal only with the present moment. – Chanakya

Mystic Experiences in 'Transcendent' Hermitages

A few days before the onset of the Second World War, two German tourists were in India to visit the Himalayas. The two young men were alarmed about the advent of war in the middle of their visit. Suspecting the possibility of being arrested by the enemies – the British – who were ruling over India at that time, they planned to escape towards Tibet and spend some time there till the war ends. They reached the distant range of eastern Himalayas in the Tibetan territory. There they saw a grand hermitage. It was quite a vibrant place, where many spiritual, devotional and welfare activities were going on. There were ample facilities, including some scientific tools, for comfortable stay of many disciples. The tourist duo was thrilled to discover this prosperous monastery. Because of their sincere request for an asylum, the hermits there agreed to give them shelter only on the condition that they would leave soon after the War ends.

The Germans had a good time in this Ashram. Upon receiving the news of ceasefire, they returned towards India on foot. Unfortunately they lost the way and reached Burma instead. While talking to the local Buddhists, they also mentioned about the grand monastery and its scientific developments etc, with a deep sense of gratitude. Surprisingly, nobody knew about this place. Some of the monks there expressed

the desire to see this hermitage. The German tourists volunteered to take them along because they had to go back to this place and reach India by taking the correct route from there. They were stunned after reaching that spot! The same mountain peak, same springs around, same rocks, where they used to sit for long hours and talk about their country, about the whole world [...]; everything was the same, so familiar...! But, the grand hermitage was nowhere in the sight! How could such a huge construction disappear with its premises, belongings and residents in just a few days? Why, and where?

The presence of *siddha yogis* and Lamas in the Himalayan Range is often experienced and reported by the disciples, pilgrims and tourists, who have spent some time in these impregnable heights. It is also known that these spiritual masters of *yoga* and *tantra* live in the subtle body, and they can appear and disappear all of a sudden anywhere at will. However, this kind of experience with a rigid construction – building of bricks and stones – sounds astonishing, unheard of before!!

How is it possible that a piece of land and an inert construction on it become visible and tangible all of a sudden in some specific period of time and disappear as non-existent in the

There is a magnet in your heart that will attract true friends. That magnet is unselfishness, thinking of others first. – Paramahansa Yogananda

other? Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj has thrown light on such possibilities in his book on “*Gyana Ganja*” – a transcendental, spiritually vibrant *siddha-ashram* in the inaccessible regions of the Himalayas.

He writes that the *siddha pīṭhas* – spiritually vibrant ashrams of supernormal *sāadhanās* – are different from ordinary hermitages and monasteries. These places cannot be seen or experienced by all visitors all the time. The long-term, intensive ascetic *sāadhanās* of the great *yogis* and the spiritual saints of *paramahansa* level transmute the place of their *sāadhanā* into a *siddha pīṭha*. If one were able to see or experience the existence of such a *siddha ashram*, it might have become possible either because of his elevated spiritual powers, or because of the grace of these great *yogis*. There are many such ‘hidden, mystic regions’ and ‘transcendent ashrams’ in the Himalayas, which remain non-existent for most tourists and pilgrims. Pt. Gopinath describes such a state of existence as that between the gross (physical) and the subliminal; it can express itself in either form.

Col. Henry S. Olcott has also mentioned about the existence of such a mystic place in his collective memoir of “Old Diary” He writes that when he and Madam Blavatsky, the then president of the Theosophical Society, went together in a car to visit around the outskirts of Bombay, they saw a majestic *maṭha* (ashram and place of worship of the Hindu or Buddhist disciples) at some distance. Madam Blavatsky asked him to wait inside the car there and she herself went to the *maṭha* on foot. She came back after some time. She had received several

garlands from the *maṭha*. She also gave one to Col. Olcott.

Next day, Col. Olcott again went towards that side because he had liked the picturesque sight there. But there was no *maṭha* around. He confirmed with the driver that they had come to the same place the day before. Instead of the building and its green surroundings, there was a huge lawn and two gardeners were working over there. They denied having seen any *maṭha* in the nearby area. The colonel was more puzzled when he learnt from the driver that he (the driver) had not seen it even the earlier day! Later on, Mrs. Blavatsky explained to him the difference between the physical and the sublime existence of such spiritual *sāadhanā* centers of yore.

Another mystic incident of this kind is described in the first part of the book “*Sādhu Darśana tathā Satprasang*”, by Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj. It narrates the experience of a teenager named Kedar of Kashi. One day, a *yogi* came to this boy in subtle body and asked to meet him the next day. He also explained the map to reach a certain spot for this meeting and told that the way for proceeding further will be guided by nature from this place.

With all his enthusiasm and curiosity, the young chap reached Vishweshwarganj as per the guidance of the *yogi*. There he saw a huge ground at some distance. There was a single narrow lane that appeared to connect the spot where he was standing, to the ground at some higher level. Some unknown force inspired him to follow this lane. After reaching the middle

When a person responds to the joys and sorrows of others as if they were his own, he has attained the highest state of spiritual union. – Veda Vyasa

of the ground, he saw a sparkling rock at one corner. A divine being with immense glow around his 'human like appearance' was sitting on this rock. Kedar somehow felt that the same divine soul had met him in the form of a *yogi* yesterday.

He was thrilled with unprecedented inner bliss after having this holy *darśana*. The divine saint called him near and asked him to sit at a flat stone there. He then imparted some occult knowledge to this young devotee. Kedar was surprised at himself, as he could grasp all these points of deep knowledge on esoteric topics so easily! The discussion continued for long. Then the divine being told the boy that he should go back soon, as his parents might be getting worried. He just spread his left arm in the front. With this, he could project a live 'television' view of the boy's home. The latter could see his family members in the house. They were all talking about him and appeared worrying about his whereabouts, as he was not traceable in the colony. The mystic master then shook his head a bit and the scene disappeared. Kedar asked him where he was sitting at the moment. "This is a place from where the entire world, every direction, every place, everybody, is nearby..." – he was told.

Kedar paid his reverent regards to this divine *guru* and returned by the same narrow street. He naturally expected to reach the spot (in Vishweshwarganj) from where he had started. But, to his surprise, he had reached a busy road in Kashi, which is about 6 Kilometers from Vishweshwarganj! He was amazed!! Earlier, this single lane had taken him to the eastern

side. Now, how could it turn its direction and became westward? Although Kedar had also been to Vishweshwarganj several times before, it was for the first time that he noticed this narrow street and the huge plain ground upwardly! No one else had seen it either. He went there again many times after this unique experience, but, like a mirage, the narrow lane appeared changing its directions at random. Neither he nor anyone else could see the mysterious ground again!

A Gujarati book titled "*Brahmāṇḍono Bheda*" (The Secrets of Universe) describes about a *maṭha* (monastery) named "Satya Gyan Ashram" in the Tibetan region. This place is also reported to be a *siddha ashrama*. A Greek tourist has mentioned about it in his memoirs of Himalayan tours. In his words, this is a unique place in the world. A Roman visitor described this *maṭha* as an occult center, where mystic knowledge and scientific developments both appear to have advanced significantly. More than 400 years ago, a Chinese scholar had also written about this *siddha ashram*. According to him, advanced-level *yoga* is practiced in this mystic ashram. The yogis of this *maṭha* have attained supernormal powers. This *siddha asharam* in the Himalayas appeared to him as a treasure of the *parā* and *aparā* knowledge. He also saw several incidences demonstrating the supernormal attainments of the *siddha yogis* there. The list of such experiments reported by him includes *Kāyākalpa* (radical transformation of one's health or personality) of some patients suffering from dreaded, intractable diseases; in one case a physically handicapped adult became normal and strong,

Happiness is your nature. It is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside when it is inside. - Ramana Maharshi

almost instantaneously without help of any instrument or medication. He further writes that clairvoyance of any place, any (past, present or future) event in the world on the 'screen' of one's palm, and creation of a stout fort in air, etc were natural experiences and easy tasks for these *siddhas*.

A similar description of another *siddha ashram* is frequently cited in the discourses of Swami Vishuddhanand Paramhansa of Kashi. (Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj has also reported about the same Gyanganj ashram in his book referred above). In his views, only those who have expertise in the deeper science of *yoga*, or who are blessed by the great spiritual saints and *yogis* associated with these ashrams, could have a glimpse of such sublime existences. He used to talk about the enormous disciplines of *Yoga Sāadhanās*, Spirituality and Natural Sciences that are taught in this 'subtle' ashram. *Siddha yogis* and spiritual scientists, some of whom are thousands of years old, are the great masters who run this *siddha ashram* for continuation of higher level experiments on *yoga sādhanās* and the *parā* and *aparā* (subliminal and manifested) forms of Nature.

According to Swami ji, many men and women who are Brahmcharis, Sanysins, Bhagunis and Paramhansas endowed with distinct *siddhis* also reside here; each one has acquired longevity. The location – where it is 'seen' in manifested existence by some deserving *sādhakas*, of this *siddha ashram* is described as further away from the impregnable spots of the (real) Kailash and Mansarovar. For most people, it is almost impossible to reach these inaccessible regions

of the Himalayas. Even if one could, the chances that one would get a glimpse of such *siddha ashrama* are extremely rare.

Sri Ram Thakur, a revered saint and mystic yogi of 19th Century Bengal often used to talk about hidden *siddha* places like Vasishtha Ashram and Yogeshwar Ashram in the inaccessible core of the Himalayas. As per his narrative portrayals, there is a grand Shiva-Ling in the Yogeshwar Ashram, which is shielded by brilliant glow of divine aura; a goddess like beautiful *yoginī* is meditating near this Shiva-Ling since immeasurable time.

He used to talk about the Kaushi Ashram which he said was a mysterious place. If visible, this ashram appears as made up of rocks. Ten *mahātāpas* (great ascetic *yogis*) are engrossed in *sāadhanā* here for thousands of years. The other three *siddha yogis*, also associated with this ashram, keep visiting different parts of the world in subtle bodies for the purpose of inspiring, guiding and helping the deserving souls, who are engaged in altruistic welfare of all living beings. Like the other saintly scholars, Sri Ram Thakur also affirms the partly visible and partly subliminal existence of the *siddha ashrams*; these places mostly remain invisible and non-existent for most people, whose inner mind and extrasensory potentials are dumb and dormant.

The ancient Indian texts describe the existence of fourteen *Lokas* of which only the earth and the solar system, or the three dimensional world in particular, are within the range of our vision or physical perception (with the support

The great secret of true success, of true happiness, is this: the man or woman who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish person, is the most successful.– Swami Vivekananda

of most advanced telescope or any other device). While these remain 'non-existent' or 'imaginary' for the ordinary mortal beings like most of us, the spiritually elevated *siddha yogis* could easily view these extraterrestrial, cosmic domains and even contact or communicate with the *siddha yogis* and divine beings there. The modern science has so far postulated five dimensions of existence. It has yet to conceptualize the other nine.

Swami Vivekananda has analyzed the Vedic concept and reality of the existence of the fourteen *lokas*. He emphasizes the need to conceptualize the *lokas* as different domains of existence in any combination of fourteen

dimensions (the three dimensional space and time constitute only four of these). He points out that – although the different *lokas* are named as the Surya Loka, Chandra Loka, etc, these should not be misinterpreted as some 'mysterious worlds' on different planets or stars. Neither are these some 'imaginary' or 'dreamy' lands. The best way to conceptualize the *lokas* other than our perceivable world, would be to regard these as some kind of subliminal horizons, which could be anywhere in the limitless cosmic expansion, may be quite 'near' us on the earth, but non-existent in the space-time domain we live in. The Buddhist Scriptures refer to such 'invisible worlds' as "Buddha Kshetras". People with evolved inner consciousness can realize the existence of these *lokas* as clearly as we perceive the physical world around.

Duryodhan accused Bhishma that he was not fighting to his full abilities due to his bias for the Pandavas. After getting so accused, Bhishma created five powerful arrows and promised that he would slay the five brothers at one go the very next day. Doubting this, Duryodhan took the five arrows to use them himself on Pandavas. Krishna got to know about this and advised Arjuna to go and ask Duryodhana for those arrows, as the boon that Duryodhana had granted him once, when Arjuna had saved his life. Duryodhana had to comply with his request and unwillingly, parted with the arrows. When Duryodhana asked Bhishma to create five more arrows, he refused, saying that he had used his lifelong merit to create them and thus, they could not be recreated. Duryodhana thus lost his only chance of winning the war.

The mystic *siddha ashrams* described above are believed to exist in some subtle *lokas* that might be there around us but in higher (beyond the order of space-time paradigm in which we exist at present) dimensions. If we refine our thinking, outlook, overall conduct and sentiments and inculcate virtuous traits in our character and deeds, as guided by the sages having divine acumen, we might someday be blessed by their grace to have a glimpse of a *siddha pīṭha*. Awakening of our extrasensory potentials and *riddhi-siddhis* of this kind could be attained by arduous spiritual endeavors of higher level *sādhana*s. Enlightenment of the internal and external domains of life is a fundamental requirement for spiritual elevation through these *sādhana*s.

Notes: 1. *Loka*: A realm of existence.

When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence. – Sri Aurobindo

Some Scientifically Valid Methods for Augmentation of Talents - I

Some people are born with inherent talents; some have to work hard to nourish the seeds of talents hidden in them. But in all cases, everyone desirous of progress has to make consistent efforts to groom, nurture and enhance one's talent(s). For this, one has to pay focused attention for refinement and strengthening of personality. Two facets of personality – credibility and efficiency, are of utmost importance in this regard.

You should note that neither talent, nor personality can be developed in isolation. As you know, personality is not confined to physique or appearance. Similarly, talent is not limited simply to some distinct skill, expertise, or ability. Talent in a complete sense is what we refer as genius. Thus, refinement and augmentation of talent also require constant refinement of inner character as well as external conduct and behavior. You only need to have the strong will to achieve this; begin pursuing this goal with focused mind, self-determination, and enthusiasm. (Rest assured! your efforts and time devoted towards this holistic development of personality will not go waste. As you progress, you will also find gradual improvement in your performance and consequent attainments/benefits on personal, familial and social fronts of your life).

Before we present the practical methods (of self-recognition, self-determination, self-refinement, sharpening of self-talents, etc), let us look at some common aspects. You might have experienced that whenever you want to learn or do something new or additional as compared to your routine or on-going activities, finding time for it comes as a major hurdle. A common tip for this is to change your life-style and make an optimal schedule of your major activities. Be alert; keep a vigil on your mind; leave no room for lethargy or habit of deferment. Adopting the policies of 'simple living and high thinking', 'early to bed and early to rise', punctuality, etc are good not only for your time-management, but these will also help you in your efficient health-management.

Equally importantly, simple living, alertness, discipline over mental unawareness, agility, etc will also help you save your resources. Then, you would be able to donate / use your resources (financial, physical, mental, creative, time, etc) more constructively for philanthropic and social reformation / development. This is crucial for self-refinement, as philanthropy requires (at least some) curtailment of self-interests and self-comforts and thus helps augmentation of generosity and compassion. Generosity and compassion help in allaying the influence of ego, avarice and selfish

What is crucial in dealing with loss is not to lose the lesson. That makes you a winner in the most profound sense. - Dayananda Saraswati

attachments, which is vital for self-refinement.

Moreover, dedicated efforts of philanthropy amount to compensating for the harm one might have caused to the society or to some individuals by his deliberate or unintentional wrong doings or untoward behavior. The goodwill received through sincere and self-less service of someone / society induce peace and positive feelings in the mind and further boost one's enthusiasm for such good activities. Apart from helping out the needy with material and moral support, contributing for and participating in constructive social - service projects/activities, etc, is the most important and relevant philanthropic activity. However, in the present times, the promotion and propagation of positive tendencies, righteous thoughts and goodwill would prove to be more useful for the virtuous development of the society. One would be able to do this only if 'one walks what one talks'. Sans credibility of character, your words would not carry any weight. Your positive tendencies, righteous thoughts and authentic character and good conduct, will not only pave the way for attainment, grooming and ascent of your higher-level talents, but will also inspire others to follow you. This is the need of our times. Entire humanity is looking for such genius 'role models' who would create more geniuses for a brighter and happier future.

A natural doubt that might arise in the minds of many readers in this context is – "Whether it would be possible to achieve all this with the support of some simple and feasible

methods? Or, is it possible to attain such higher-level (evolved levels) of eminence of personality and such distinguished talents by starting with some simple and feasible practices?

The answer is – "Yes, indeed." As we all know, specially designed simple mechanical tools, games, and teaching methods are devised to teach alphabets, numerals and locomotion to a little child; and, there also are effective teaching modes and methods and practices which help him grow successively in his sincere attempts to master distinct expertise in any discipline or knowledge. Similar is the case with grooming and development of personality and refinement and enhancement of any talent. Several great geniuses of all times and sages of human psychology have devised practical methods, which provide one with an opportunity and support for finer development of personality and augmentation of talents.

For any kind of personal development training some pre-conditioning (of mind-body system) and certain disciplines are required. For example, in order to build strong muscles, a wrestler or a gymnast is required to follow a routine of prescribed exercises along with diet-management. The exercises or practices for talent refinement and augmentation given below would also be effective and render best outcomes if one practices them sincerely and regularly. These methods have been devised based on thorough consideration of human psychology and the influence of one's intrinsic tendencies in any attempt of self-improvement. Several scientifically planned experiments

Do not be proud of wealth, people, relations and friends, or youth. All these are snatched by time in the blink of an eye. Giving up this illusory world, know and attain the Supreme. - Adi Shankara

conducted at the Brahmavarchas Research Centre, Shantikunj, Haridwar, have affirmed positive impact of these methods. Many trainees / participants of the spiritual refinement and personality development programs of the *Yug Nirman* Mission, and students/scholars of the Dev Sanskriti University, Haridwar also practice these exercises.

Here we present only a brief description of these methods/exercises. For details and practical guidance / exposure, one may participate in the *sādhana* sessions / training courses at Shantikunj, Haridwar (www.awgp.org) or Dev Sanskriti University (www.dsvv.org).

1. Auto-suggestion:

Choose a quiet ambience and sit comfortably (preferably with erect spinal cord; you may take support for the back if necessary), keeping the body still and mind withdrawn from mundane subjects. Calmly take a deep breath. Now, imagine that a beam of *Prāṇa Vidyuta* (vital energy, bio-electricity) is radiating from a focal point in the middle of the brain and flowing with a great force in all external and internal organs of the body, veins, arteries etc. With it, all sluggishness is being gradually replaced by vibrant energy, making every part of the body strong and active. Alacrity and capability of each sense-organ is increasing manifold. Face is becoming more radiant. Intellectual potential is getting sharpened and augmented; and, as a result, your potentials and talents are enhanced and brightened, which will be expressed in excellence of your deeds and conduct. [Practice this exercise for 10-15 minutes every day.]

As a matter of fact autosuggestion is the key to transmutation of personality. The Upanishads affirm this fact as – “*Yo Yachchadhrāḥ Sa Eva Saḥ*” (one becomes what one thinks about himself and regards himself as). If one thinks positively, aspires to become like great personalities, and deeply feels that his being is also imbibed with their good qualities, his (unconscious and subconscious) mind begins to draw corresponding attributes from the limitless ocean of consciousness-energy pervading the universe. This generates corresponding currents of vital spiritual energy within.

Psychologists also advocate transformation of personality by autosuggestion (and bio-feedback). In their views, similar to the ionosphere surrounding the earth, there exists an “*Ideosphere*” (aura of thoughts) around the human brain. The nature (characteristic) of the *ideosphere* of a person keeps varying as per the nature of his thoughts and mentality.

Deep inculcation of higher ideals in the thoughts and aspirations and consequent excellence of character/personality brightens this aura (*ideosphere*), the glow of which also reflects in the ‘halo’ around the face. With gradual progress, enhanced *prāṇa* of the *sādhaka* also induces bio-magnetism (in this aura) that may attract others’ minds. The utterances and advices of such radiating personalities have unique power to influence and even transform the thinking of others. Thus, with the help of intense autosuggestions one’s mental aura can also be ‘converted’ into a ‘personality-magnet’. Experts of Human-psychology say – ‘*Think and grow rich*’ and ‘*Adopt positive principles today*’;

Irons rusts from disuse, stagnant water loses its purity and in cold weather becomes frozen; even so does inaction sap the vigor of the mind. - Leonardo da Vinci

these remarks suggest adoption of positive thinking and principles right from the present moment. Indeed, autosuggestions and consequent self-motivation has played a key role in preeminent transformation of the personalities of most great men and women across the globe. In his adolescence, Mahatma Gandhi was inspired by the play 'Harish Chandra'. This motivated him to experiment with truthfulness. Through constant autosuggestion he continued on the arduous path of truth. How far and how greatly this process helped him is well-known to the world.

In the experiments at the Brahmavarchas Research Centre, mental stimulations are induced with the help of audio-visual signals and after a short interval, the subject is asked to ponder over the reactions. This process generates a strong bio-energy current which is monitored directly on G.S.R. Bio-Feedback. In this experiment the subject is able to see the reactions of his thought process on variation of his skin resistance. The experiments also show variation in respiration-rate, pulse rate, blood pressure, etc, in response to different types of autosuggestions. Many kinds of meditative practices, especially the *vipashyana* meditation of Buddhism and the Jain system of meditation are based on autosuggestions. There is no reason why adoption of adept technique of autosuggestion should not bring about the desired improvement in the talents of a person.

2. 'Self-recognition' in a Mirror:

This is basically a meditative practice of self-assessment and self-improvement. For this, you sit in front of a large-size mirror (with

erect spinal cord); for example, you may sit either cross-legged on the floor, or on a chair. Look constantly at each part of your body for a few seconds with a feeling of appreciation and confidence in its healthy state and competence. Now concentrate on your inner body; begin with a self-appraisal: think that the inner-self is getting purified and strengthened, which in turn is cleansing of all your weaknesses and vices. Recall that God is very kind, His grace is Omnipotent. Forgetting the past, conceptualize that the intensity of *prāṇa-vidyuta* (bio-electricity, vital-energy) is increasing in the internal organs of the body and its radiance is permeating outwards and increasing the glow of skin-radiation from every part of the body. Imagine that your body, which was earlier pale, infirm and weak, has now been transformed into healthy, strong, and active; and every pore of the body is 'electrified' by bio-electricity.

Think that with this process, your (personality) development is also gaining momentum, Imagine that existence and identity of your body is getting completely merged with the bright radiating figure (reflection of self in the mirror) in front of you and hence, there is a significant refinement and rise of your talents and potentials. This practice is a meditative *sādhana* of Laya Yoga. If practiced sincerely and regularly [initially for 10-15 minutes every day] it may transform one from within (*bhāva-kalpa*).

3. Meditation on Specific Colourful Domains:

Each color-component of light is impregnated with specific energy current derived from the

There is no austerity equal to a balanced mind, and there is no happiness equal to contentment; there is no disease like covetousness, and no virtue like mercy. – Chanakya

sun-rays. It leaves a distinct imprint and effect on the body and the brain. In a healthy person, these constituents are in a state of equilibrium. Whenever a change occurs in the ratio of color absorption in the body, or there is a distortion or disequilibrium in their absorption, the healthy system of the body gets disturbed and becomes prone to disorder/disease. In Chromo-therapy the affected organ or particular part of the body is exposed to the rays of specific colored light for a specified period through the medium of transparent colored glass or electric bulbs.

For improving the efficacy of mental faculties, the subject is asked to meditate on specific colors with closed eyes. The seven colors of spectrum (Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red) are isolated and flashed with

the help of a spectroscope. With the help of special lenses all colors but the desired one are filtered out and the subject is made to concentrate on that particular color for a prescribed duration of time. This process stimulates the ultrafine nerves in the brain and specific '*chakras*' (extra-sensory energy centers). Regular practice of this meditation triggers the process of desired change. In this meditation, it is conceptualized that the particular color is omnipresent in the cosmos and is also permeating inside the body with its characteristic energy. This process of meditation is recommended for a period of five to ten minutes. The choice of colors is made by specialists and depends on the psycho-spiritual state of the subject.

(To be continued in the next issue)

Owing to his lack of knowledge, the ordinary man cannot attempt to resolve conflicting theories of conflicting advice into a single organized structure. He is likely to assume the information available to him is on the order of what we might think of as a few pieces of an enormous jigsaw puzzle. If a given piece fails to fit, it is not because it is fraudulent; more likely the contradictions and inconsistencies within his information are due to his lack of understanding and to the fact that he possesses only a few pieces of the puzzle. Differing statements about the nature of things, differing medical philosophies, different diagnoses and treatments—all of these are to be collected eagerly and be made a part of the individual's collection of puzzle pieces. Ultimately, after many lifetimes, the pieces will fit together and the individual will attain clear and certain knowledge.

- Alan R. Beals

**Effective and meaningful sermon is that which is given not by speech
but by example. – Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya**

The Glory of Srimad Bhagwad Gita

Srimad Bhagwad Gita is universally acknowledged as one of the world's literary and spiritual masterpieces. In fact, the Gita is such a spiritual text which gives a new meaning to life each time it is attentively read. Revered Gurudev Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya lived Gita in every breath of his life. In his lifespan he authored so much soul-uplifting literature that it weighs more than five times his weight; but 'Gita Encyclopedia' was his dream project. It was his earnest wish that the teachings of the Gita should be presented in the context of modern times. This task has been taken up by a dedicated team led by Dr. Pranav Pandya. This work is a fusion of the thoughts of revered Gurudev and the essence of Srimad Bhagwad Gita. We will present it in the form of a series of articles in this magazine. It will provide practical guidance to our readers, through examples, about how they can imbibe the teachings of the Gita in real life. In this first article, we begin with the eminence of the Gita. – Editor

Let us begin with the most auspicious prayer that pays obeisance to Srimad Bhagavad Gita. This prayer has been sung by the great Sage, Vishnu incarnate, Veda Vyasa -

*Gita Sugita Kartavyaa Kimanyaih Shastravistarih |
Ya Svayam Padmanabhasya mukh-padmadvinihsrita |*

This means, "The Gita is a melodious poem. By singing or contemplating the verses of Gita, where does the need remain to learn about other Shastras (disciplines) in detail? The Supreme Lord Vishnu, who bears the lotus in his navel, has himself recited the Gita, which is why mere words are insufficient to capture the magnificence of the Gita."

When we try to evaluate the importance of the Gita, it becomes obvious that merely chanting its verses is not enough; its true meaning and expressions have to be infused into our souls. Gita can be regarded as a philosophy and an

elixir of life. Every time one reads it, one uncovers a new way of leading a purposeful life. Therefore, instead of reading the Gita in the old way, that is, by merely chanting its verses, one should regard the Gita as the Word of God Incarnate and try to assimilate His teachings into one's life and convey this understanding by his conduct in daily life. Only then can it be said that one has truly understood the Gita and its importance. In the context of pre-eminence of the Gita, there appears another shloka -

*Sarvopadanishado Gaavo Dogdhaa Gopalnandanah |
Partho Vatsah sudheerbhoktaa Dugdham Gitaamritam
Mahat |*

This means that all Upanishads are like a herd of cows. Lord Krishna, the son of the cowherd Gopala, has performed the task of milking these motherly cows. Partha Arjun can be regarded as a calf that is sucking the milk (or

Don't accumulate if you do not need. The excess of wealth in your hands is for the society, and you are the trustee for the same. – Mahavira

Divine knowledge) that is produced by the cows (Upanishads). The essence of all knowledge that is contained in Upanishads is in the Gita. Lord Krishna, the Yogiraj (the greatest of Yogis), himself has presented this supreme knowledge in eighteen chapters spanning seven hundred and ten verses of the Gita. This lends the Gita its place as the quintessence of spiritual wisdom.

Gita is used in the courts of law to swear by the witnesses prior to testimony. For this reason, Gita is regarded as the book representing Hinduism. As Muslims swear on the Koran, Christians on the Bible, the Gita for Hindus has been regarded as equivalent to these other Holy Scriptures. All scholars have regarded Gita as the representative book for Hindus and have declared that people should swear by it to speak the truth. This shows the importance of the Gita. It condenses all knowledge extracted from Vedas and Upanishads in one book. Srimad Bhagavad Gita forms one of the three texts of the Prasthantrayi (which refers to the three canonical texts of Hindu philosophy; namely, the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita). All the three Holy texts form the foundation of Indian Spirituality and they are special to a person following this path.

Lord Krishna and Sage Veda Vyasa are the two, of the twenty-four, avatars that incarnated in Dwapara Yuga. Both avatars are closely associated with the Gita. Lord Krishna uttered the verses of the Gita and Sage Veda Vyasa transcribed the Lord's words in poetic form. Both are avatars of Lord Vishnu. Sage

Veda Vyasa was also instrumental in the writing of the Mahabharata, of which the Gita is a part. The Mahabharata has eighteen Parva(s) (divisions) – the first half (that is, prior to the deliverance of Bhagwad Gita) has six Parvas, the Gita is a part of the sixth Parva and the latter half (that is, after the deliverance of Bhagwad Gita) has twelve Parvas. How extraordinary is this epic that describes poetically the war that took place between seven Akshouhini army on one side and eleven Akshouhini army on the other? (One Akshouhini army segment is formed with 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horses and 1,09,350 foot-soldiers.) Lord Krishna, just before the start of this Great War, imparted the teachings of the Gita. Traditionally, sages and saints of those times shared their wisdom in secluded places such as forests, mountains and caves, whereas the teachings of the Gita were imparted at the center of a battlefield, between the two armies. This fact elevates the Gita in its importance. Like the eighteen Parvas of Mahabharata, the Gita also has eighteen chapters, which can be sub-divided into three parts of six chapters each. The first six chapters of the Gita are based on Karma Yoga, chapters seven to twelve contain the most touching interpretation of Bhakti Yoga, and the last six chapters take Arjuna to the heights of Gyana Yoga, explaining to him the importance of Swadharma (his own duty as a warrior) and Yuga Dharma (societal law and ethics), culminating in Arjuna's willing acceptance towards fulfilling his duty. While the trio of inter-related disciplines – Karma, Bhakti and Gyana – converges in various parts of the Gita, the book focuses on segregating and explaining these disciplines in separate parts.

**Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from
an indomitable will. - Mahatma Gandhi**

The glory of a book is enhanced by the glory of its author. An author is one who creates the book. An author is similar to a mother, who assimilates all her energies and observes them develop into an incredible creation, her child at the time of his birth. Similarly, Lord Krishna has assimilated all the paths of Yoga into the Gita and imparted that knowledge to Arjuna. The only way to understand the mystery of Srimad Bhagavad Gita is to associate Lord Krishna with the Gita just as we associate a mother with her child. Vinoba Bhave used to refer to the Gita as "Gitai". In Maharashtra, a mother (or 'Maa' in Hindi) is addressed as "Aai" - hence "Gitai" refers to the Gita as "Gita Maa". Vinoba Bhave used to say that to protect oneself from life's troubles and adversities; one should take refuge in the Gita. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that he regards the Gita as his mother, and that whenever he felt troubled by various issues he used to seek and find answers in the Gita just like a child receives answers to his questions from his mother. This is why it is being emphasized that one should try to understand Lord Krishna who gave birth to the Gita through his words. Without understanding Lord Krishna, it is impossible to understand the Gita.

The creator of this spiritual masterpiece, Lord Krishna, can be regarded as the Supreme Teacher, one whose teachings can benefit the whole universe. About Him, it has been said - *Vasudevsutam Devam Kanschanoormardanam | Devakiparamanandam Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum | |*

This means that Shri Krishna is the teacher (guru) of the whole world. This is because He

came to the world with the grand resolution of solving the problems of that era. There were different types of problems - political, communal, religious, those related to nature and the universe as a whole. In order to solve these, Lord Krishna said, "Sambhavami Yugey Yugey", that is, for properly reinstating righteousness and order in the cosmos, He reincarnates in every Yuga (era). Every Yuga (era) requires a special divine incarnation. For this very purpose, Lord Krishna came in Dwapara Yuga as a Jagadguru (Supreme Teacher). This word - Jagadguru is not associated with any other Vishnu avatar except Lord Krishna who is also reverently addressed as "Mahayogi" (Greatest of the Yogis) and "Yogiraj" (King of Yogis). It is here that Lord Krishna's association with the Gita distinguishes him from all other avatars of Lord Vishnu.

In August 1969, revered Gurudev explained in Akhand Jyoti the workings of an 'avatar' as follows, "An avatar has only one purpose - fighting against and eliminating growing evil in society. This is the true purpose of an avatar". Gurudev wrote further, "It is the divine powers that descend in the form of the flow of thoughts or actions that solve the prevalent problems of the society of that era". Revered Gurudev was also born endowed with a consciousness resembling that of a divine incarnation. He did not limit himself to giving discourses on knowledge, action, devotion, or ethics, but also unearthed various modes of worship and integrated them with Yug Dharma (that is, serving the society and the world at large). Through "Thought

Love does not grow on trees or bought in the market; if one wants to be "Loved" one must first know how to give (unconditional) Love. - Kabir

Revolution Campaign" (Vichar Kranti Abhiyan) he sought to eradicate evil thoughts by writing volumes of uplifting literature. Gurudev's most significant accomplishment was that he made it possible for everybody to worship Goddess Gayatri and perform Yagya, both of which were restricted to a certain community and gender, so that all sections of society could benefit from it. Only one who has a consciousness equivalent to that of the divine incarnation can accomplish this monumental task. Revered Gurudev said, "Every avatar in his era did lead the war against evil forces, but they had a massive support of people. It is this support that helped them to completely eradicate evil". Gurudev's words put special emphasis on complete eradication of evil. This is because if evil is not completely destroyed, it may reappear and again overpower the good. That is why evil should be completely eliminated. Revered Gurudev too gathered a massive support of people, under the banner of "Laal Mashaal" (the flaming torch) - the logo of All World Gayatri Parivar, to convey the message that the New Era can only be ushered by a collective effort through a Thought Revolution. The full issue of August 1969 (Hindi) Akhand Jyoti magazine is dedicated to "Thought Revolution". In this issue, Gurudev wrote - "These days the discomfort of Partha Sarthi can be easily felt. His uneasiness is due to the confusion of Arjuna." If we want to understand what Gurudev is saying in these lines, we should place Gurudev in the position of Partha Sarthi (Lord Krishna) and ourselves in Arjuna's position, and then try to understand the concern Gurudev had about how we are leading imprudent lives without any noble

ideals. We should comprehend Gurudev and his message of the Gita in this perspective.

The Gita, delivered by the Supreme Teacher, Lord Krishna, is also referred to as the Bhagavad Gita. Throughout the Gita, the parts where the Lord speaks, a phrase "Shri Bhagwaan Uvacha" (or "The Lord Says") appears every time. Nowhere is there a mention of the words "Shri Krishna" or "Vasudeva". In fact, the Gita is that message, which Lord Krishna, after attaining a Yogic state that aligns with Supreme consciousness, delivered using godly expressions to Arjuna. This is why it is called Bhagavad Gita. While Lord Krishna has delivered three other sermons, Anugita, Pandavgita and Uddhavgita, none of them is referred to as Srimad Bhagavad Gita. After the Mahabharata war was over, Arjuna told Lord Krishna, "The Gita discourse helped me overcome my uneasiness, but I would like to listen to the Gita from you again, as in the middle of the battlefield I could not understand the message completely." Lord Krishna then delivered a discourse that came to be known as Anugita. Lord Krishna offered Pandavgita discourse to the Pandavas before they embarked for ascension to Heaven and Uddhavgita, which belongs to the eleventh section (Skand) of Srimad Bhagavad Puran, was His discourse to Uddhava. In these three sermons, Lord Krishna's manner was that of a preacher whereas during the Bhagavad Gita discourse, he had a Godly demeanor, consequently making the Gita the most important spiritual text of Sanatan Dharma.

A potent poison becomes the best drug on proper administration. On the contrary, even the best drug becomes a potent poison if used badly. – Charak

How can India as a Nation become a Role Model for the World to Emulate?

The 21st century is entering its sweet sixteen. Many people are keeping an account of these years in their own different ways. What have we gained and what have we lost in these years? As a nation, what progress have we made and in what fields have we seen downfall? What new trends and thought processes have emerged? More importantly, with time, how much have we progressed towards our goal of glorious future? We, Indians can perhaps feel happy because it has been predicted that the 21st century belongs to India. We should also feel proud because our country is being perceived as an emerging super power.

The western culture has created the entire paraphernalia of comfort. However, it has snatched the peace of common man. In spite of his many resources and comforts, man has ended up being restless and confused.

In the previous century, Soviet Union gave the gift of communism to the world. This raised hope in all those around the world that there would be a new kind of man born who will form a new society where everyone would be equal. Everyone will have their basic necessities met. Everyone will work and produce for everybody. There will be no discrimination in the society. Everyone will get

equal share of what is produced. But, to be frank, this never happened.

Lenin did not live long enough to create such a society. Stalin, in the name of 'enemies of working class' killed millions of people. He subjected his opponents to immense torture. People did not have the freedom to express. In the name of progress, the entire nation was led on the path of becoming a military power. The resultant irony was that USSR as a nation got regimented, but the common man of Soviet Union became weak and helpless. In spite of his ability to speak, he was rendered a mute spectator.

When Gorbachev revived the term 'glasnost' as a generalized appeal for increased openness and transparency in government institutions, it changed citizens' views towards the government and led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union got scattered into pieces. The principles of communism were left in the lurch. The humanitarian picture of Russian man that emerges from the writings of Pushkin, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekov, Gorky and Dostoyevsky has blurred today.

Who can call China and Vietnam to be communist countries? When the Pandora box

Wisdom leads to unity, but ignorance to separation. So long as God seems to be outside and far away, there is ignorance. But when God is realized within, that is true knowledge. – Ramakrishna

of cultural revolutions opened, and the chain of events relating to communism came forth, where was the discussion about creating a new man? There was nothing but mass killings and murder. So, with this background, what can communism offer to the world? Even if Marxism is scientific, its followers have failed to establish those principles in the society.

If we bring Islam to the discussion, there are many good things like brotherhood, equality, social reform and love. But in all the Islamic countries, democracy, equality, justice and the status of women is not something to be proud about. Religious fanaticism tends to overpower an individual's freedom. There was a time when Muslims had made significant contributions in the fields of architecture, city planning, textiles, governance, literature and philosophy. But the lack of education, social discrimination and injustice has led to birth of terrorism which now threatens to lead the world back into the dark middle ages with its mass killings and terror.

The civilizations of Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Rome thrived in the past but their glory has long faded and gone. If we look at the present day, western thought is ruling the roost in all aspects of science and technology. The concept of Republic was given by Plato while democracy is the contribution of the West. Leonardo da Vinci is a multi-faceted genius who contributed simultaneously in different fields. He dissected the human body to understand its anatomy so that his paintings and sculptures were life-like. In the

16th century, he conceived concepts like flying and robotics. He even worked in making them a reality and made some progress too.

Newton, Einstein, Darwin, Max Planck, Descartes, Galileo, Copernicus, etc are the intellectuals and scientists of the highest order. They are all gifts from the West. They have made a deep impact on the thought process of mankind. Be it, space-technology, marine engineering, zoology, botany, geography, ancient philosophy, or the latest branches of computer science - all domains are being dominated by the West. They are the proponents of capitalism and consumerism.

If the Western thought has contributed to beautifying the world, it also has contributed in inventing things that can destroy it as well. In spite of its innumerable specialties there appears to be its lack of understanding of life. The West, which has done immense research, has not understood life and the fundamental principles of humanism. It has not explored the right methods of living a holistic life. This may lead to its downfall.

India, which had this traditional knowledge and understanding about life, has forgotten it. The knowledge of the Upanishads, the art of living given by the Rishis in the Vedas – are all present in India, but it still ignores its past and is blindly following western culture. The biggest gift of India to the world has been Mahatma Gandhi, who expansively imbibed the knowledge and tradition of the country in his life. He gave a practical form to spirituality

**Once you start working on something, don't be afraid of failure and don't abandon it.
People who work sincerely are the happiest. – Chanakya**

and brought independence to this country. He showed those who defined revolution as bloodshed and murder, that public opinion can be changed and revolution brought about by truth and non-violence. He demonstrated that a man can attain peace by imbibing ethical principles.

Following the line of Gandhiji, Yugrishi Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya gave a new life philosophy that is a synthesis of both spirituality and science. Through his life-long experiments, he has shown that if spiritual perspective is given to science, the western culture of crass consumerism can be reversed. In the same way, India can guide the entire world by giving a scientific perspective to its spirituality. Scientific spirituality is like the '*Sanjeevini*' (revitalizer) to the ailing western culture.

Yugrishi also felt that harmony between religion and politics could do wonders to the suffering

humanity. Unfortunately, such harmony is lacking these days. Even though both are complementary to each other, religion remains to be of greater importance as it influences the inner core of human psyche which then produces corresponding outside physical situations. Therefore, we should rely on dharma to educate and bring worthy changes in the hearts and minds of the masses rather than pleading help from the government administration which should be better left alone to get on with its duty of serving people in the physical field. We should utilize dharma more than ever to educate the minds of the masses to rouse, guide, improve and refine their thoughts and feelings. The great luminaries who have been able to transform the world actually came from the world of dharma. If we adopt this mantra given by Yugrishi, then India has all the chances to become a role model for the world to emulate.

One day a villager, walking down the street in a small town came across a large stone in the middle of his path. He complained: "Who could be so careless as to leave such a big stone on the road? Why does someone not remove it?" He went away complaining. The next day, the same thing happened with a milkman. He too went away grumbling but left the stone as it was. Then another day, a young man came across the stone. Worried that someone may fall over it and hurt himself, he decided to push it aside. He pushed long and hard all by himself and eventually managed to remove the stone from the path. He came back and noticed a piece of paper where the stone was kept. He picked the paper and opened it. Inside was written, "You are the true wealth of this nation."

There are two kinds of people: Talkers and doers. Talkers merely talk, while doers do.

The greatest musical instrument given to a human being is the voice. - Dayananda Saraswati

Influence of Human Biomagnetism on Residential Buildings

Residential structures are influenced by the biomagnetic fields of the persons occupying them for long periods. A building left unoccupied for a long time deteriorates faster than a similar structure inhabited by people. This phenomenon appears contradictory to common experience of unused articles retaining their usability longer than those being used frequently. The mystery lies in the strength being provided to the constituents of the building by the collective biomagnetic fields of its residents.

Places frequently visited by people having identical temperament and objectives create specific biomagnetic fields in the surrounding area charged with similar ideologies (thoughts). (Henceforth we shall refer to specifically charged environments around individuals and places as *Ideospheres*.)

This phenomenon is observed in everyday experience of having peace and tranquility at places of worship and pilgrimage, relaxation and happiness at venues of entertainment (theaters and picnic spots) and fear and apprehension at places associated with death and violence (war zones and cemeteries).

After a prolonged stay, the *ideospheres* of houses begin to vibrate with ideologies (thought waves) conforming to their residents. The

subtle constituents of attitudes and temperaments of these occupants retain their hold on the *ideosphere* of the building for long periods after their departure from the place. On entering a house, experienced yogis can easily have a perception of the characteristics of people who are living, or had lived, at that place.

Entering a house charged with righteous thoughts of good people, one feels peace and tranquility. On the other hand, where wicked and malicious people had lived, the *ideospheres* vibrate with disturbing thoughts. On spending some time at such place one would be startled by having malevolent thoughts contrary to one's normal temperament. (*Lonely sea beaches, mountains and Virgin Islands unpolluted by ideospheres of crowds, provide serenity.*)

Ideospheres of places where violent or brutal acts had taken place do not change for ages. Nooks and corners of buildings, where criminal activities, arson, forced abortions, tortures, murders or similar banal activities had taken place, sob and wail. At such places, sometimes sufferings of victims of cruelty manifest into fearful haunting and terrifying dreams.

Certain residential structures have a notoriety of being ominous or haunted. Occupants of these buildings feel apprehensive or suffer for

Better than worshiping gods is obedience to the laws of righteousness. – The Buddha

no apparent reason, or face disturbances by poltergeists. A peep into the history of such structures would connect them to some past disturbing event. Some resident or residents of the building might have undergone prolonged physical and mental agony or the thought of the building might have evoked deep anguish in a related person living elsewhere. Residents of places vibrating with violent mental agonies of their earlier occupants cannot live peacefully. With the exception of a few having strong will power, an ordinary person feels uneasiness at such places.

Why places become haunted?

Each particle of body has a natural capability to develop into a full-grown individual. (*Remember Dolly the first clone produced by man*). Given a suitable environment, units of biomagnetic fields of human bodies are capable of producing identical biomagnetic clones of the related individual having similar appearance and temperamental characteristics. In the event of death, when the soul departs, whereas the physical constituents of the body disintegrate, the biomagnetic fields do not disperse for long periods of time. The residual biomagnetic field continues to “live” in the erstwhile residence of the dead person. If a building is left unoccupied for long, (unless otherwise disturbed by new visitors), finding an appropriate environment, the biomagnetic field of its earlier occupant (or occupants) reproduce independent bioelectric clones (*etheric doubles*) having personality of the deceased. A single particle is capable of developing into such an entity. In spite of the soul of the dead individual having found the body of a newborn elsewhere in the next birth, the residual biomagnetic field

sometimes continues to persist at the place of his (or her) living as an etheric double.

The so-called ghosts, spirits, phantoms, apparitions, poltergeists, etc. are often independent creations of feeble biomagnetic fields of long dead persons. However, these astral bodies need not have all characteristics of the past living persons. In spite of having a similar physical appearance, their activities may differ.

The virtual dynamic images found in long unoccupied residential structures do not necessarily belong to their earlier occupants. Stray biomagnetic fields may sometime enter in deserted places and finding a suitable environment develop into images seen or regarded by people as ghosts and spirits.

If a long-unoccupied building is visited by a small number of persons, their biomagnetic fields sometimes agitate the astral bodies living at that place into greater activity. However, if the number of persons is large, the collective increased charge of their *ideospheres* forcefully pushes these images out from the place.

Thus the phenomena of sightings of ghosts or mysterious movements are indicative of development of biomagnetic field of some living or dead person into an active virtual image. Unless intensified by prolonged presence, these manifestations can be easily erased. Thorough cleaning, disinfection, radiations produced by fire and mantras during rituals (*Yagya*), and occupation by a large number of strong-willed persons compel these apparitions to quit the place.

**Take risks in your life; if you win, you can lead! If you lose,
you can guide! - Swami Vivekananda**

Tips for Living a Happy Life

It is essential to possess *savoir faire* (the ability to behave in a correct and confident way in different situations) to lead a happy life. We meet different types of people every day. All of them have different personalities. It is a challenging task to cope up with such a variety of people without getting affected. Some people leave a positive impression but some cast a negative impact on our lives. This affects our happiness and progress in a positive or negative way. Sometimes we encounter complex people who are difficult to understand. Initially they will appear good and will try to develop relations for their selfish motives, but by the time we realize their reality it becomes too late.

How do we get along in such situations? Experts in social behavior believe that one's own personality traits are more important in such matters. They suggest that people possessing following traits are less prone to get affected negatively and hence they are more likely to lead a happy life.

The first among these is 'knowledge'. Knowledge doesn't mean knowing the facts and figures. It means the comprehensiveness of experiences gained from real life. It is the ability to properly judge a person or situation. This trait helps in understanding the person with whom one is interacting or a critical

situation one is facing and then taking a proper action to deal with it.

The second trait relates to 'selfless love'. It means to love regardless of your personal needs. Loving wholeheartedly, without any personal gain, helps in knitting the fabric of good relationships.

The third element is 'hard work'. It makes one self-reliant and confident. A hard working person never has to rely on others.

The next most important factor for leading a happy life is to maintain sound health. One, who knows how to live a healthy life, actually knows how to be happy. A healthy man faces the ups and downs of life firmly and gets out of it in a short span of time.

One should also develop a spirit of helping others. Everyone enjoys seeking cooperation but the real virtue lies in helping others without expecting any returns. This way one can make true friends. Such people also become popular amongst the strangers in no time.

A very important and rewarding personality trait is positivity. People who practice gratitude are happier, less stressed and less depressed. As Oprah Winfrey rightly says - "Be thankful

Please subdue the anguish of your soul. Nobody is destined only to happiness or to pain. The wheel of life takes one up and down by turn. – Kalidasa

for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough".

Empathy is another virtue that must be imbibed by a spiritually-oriented person. "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." - Says Leo Buscaglia.

There are number of other good traits, for example, integrity, honesty, loyalty, responsibility, humility, fairness, perseverance, etc. that impact one's happiness.

Men / women who possess majority of these traits can easily deal with all kinds of people. However, one may encounter some people who are negative or are too complex to handle. In an encounter with such people, it is wise to remain cool and review our actions based on three criteria: (1) Can I change the situation? (2) Should I let it go as such? (3) Should I maintain distance with this person?

First of all try the first approach. Believe that aggressive and antagonistic people can also be changed. It depends on one's influence on the person. Does the person respect and trust him/her? Is there a possibility of changing the situation? If the answers to these questions are positive, one should proceed confidently without any fear. But be aware that such people do not change themselves to please others. So while attempting to change such persons, one should be patient.

Where it seems difficult to change the other person let things go on as they are. Don't backbite such people. It is also useless if you lose patience. Also don't ever think of being revengeful. With a cool mind, be conscious of your self-respect and deal with the situation gracefully. Do remain unaffected by their emotional drama too. It should be understood that their absurd behavior is the result of dissatisfaction and feeling of being unsafe in life. Don't stress yourself for them. It will only leave you with sleepless nights. Try to appreciate their plus points. This way, it may be possible to bring in them a positive change in future.

When the second approach also fails, then turn to the third option, that is - keep distance or neglect them. If you become negative in the company of intolerant / intoxicating people or feel sickness, or observe change in your behavior, simply neglect them and maintain distance. Don't accommodate others to the extent that they damage your personality. Speak out frankly and stick to it to get the desired result. With the passage of time, things will become normal.

Dr. Kelly Neff, a renowned psychologist, author and founder of 'The Lucid Planet' suggests some more tips (other than those cited above) to live a happy life:

- (1) Find a place of Flow: In Positive Psychology, the concept of "Flow" is defined as the "complete immersion in activity for its own sake." When we are in flow, such as when we are running a race,

Live and allow others to live; hurt no one; life is dear to all living beings. – Mahavira

writing a song, or reading a great book, our self-awareness dissipates, time seems to stop, and we become focused, peaceful, and attentive to the task at hand. People who frequently experience flow tend to be happy, productive, creative and focused.

(2) Surround yourself with Supportive People: Even though this life can sometimes feel like an individual journey, we need other people around us in order to feel happy. In fact, recent research has indicated that social relationships are the strongest predictors of happiness, much stronger than income or wealth. So be social, surround yourself with people who make you feel good, and release those who make you feel bad.

(3) Learn when to say "No": As psychologist Dr. Thema Davis so beautifully puts it, *"saying yes to happiness means learning to say no to things and people that stress you out."* Saying yes to everyone and everything can lead you to feel overwhelmed, increase your stress, and leave you less time and resources to take care of yourself!

(4) Unplug and spend more time in Nature: If you really want to maximize the benefits of outdoor time, spend time in green nature – even five minutes of *"green exercise"* can lead to improvements in mood and self-esteem, according to researchers at the University of Essex. Even better, combine your outside time with meditation, yoga, or other therapeutic movement arts.

(5) Practice Forgiveness: This one can be challenging for many of us who have been wronged and/or who have experienced traumas perpetrated by other people in our lives. But, Dr. Fred Luskin of the Stanford University Forgiveness Project has found that forgiveness is a huge predictor of happiness and wellbeing.

So, try to imbibe as many of the above advices as you can and attract the trust and respect of other people, influence others, improve your self-esteem, self-respect and confidence, create a foundation for happy, healthy relationships, stay committed to your values and goals and improve your chances of success in work and other endeavors.

So long as the temple of the body is well and strong; so long as old age is still far in the distance; so long as the senses remain unimpaired, and so long as there is no diminution of life: precisely so long must the wise man make every effort to enter into eternal glory. What does it avail to dig a well when the house is on fire?

- Bhatruhari

Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest acts.
This is the secret of success. – Swami Sivananda

How to Maintain Harmony in Relations?

Everyone wants harmony in life and even makes whole-hearted efforts for attaining the same. But very often something remains wanting and the result is failure. In fact, maintaining harmony requires exceptional endeavors. Any slackening in efforts may prevent the desired outcome. Life is multi-dimensional; so only when a person triumphs in various aspects and is able to establish equilibrium among all of them, one may be called successful in a comprehensive manner.

A person may be proficient in business, but poor in maintaining relations. This weakness will reduce the happiness of his life. Similarly, one may be good in handling the relations, but is frail in some other respect. This deficiency will substantially minimize his happiness. All the dimensions of our life are closely interlinked and impact each other. Our life begins to wobble if there is imbalance or distortion even in a single aspect. Thus, in order to lead a comprehensively successful life, we should understand the basic principles of human life and imbibe those virtues which give rise to harmony.

The most important factor leading to happy life is self-reliance. One should earn enough money by righteous means so that one can support one's family. The virtues of hard work and perseverance normally help in this matter. However, in order to succeed in one's job or

own business self-confidence is a must. TV journalists Katty Kay and Claire Shipman in their book titled 'The confidence code' write that though success depends on the ability of the person, it also depends on his confidence in the same proportions. However, they argue that while confidence is partly influenced by genetics, it is not a fixed psychological state. It requires a choice: less worrying about people-pleasing and perfection and more action, risk taking, and fast failure.

Caring and sharing are excellent virtuous traits which help in maintaining harmony. This is so because when the needy gets the help, he keeps an attitude of gratitude and positive sentiments towards the helping person. This serves as a blessing for the helper.

Our life is a world of human relationships. There is need to preserve and cherish the bonds of relations. If strong and secure, these bonds give us inner strength and eliminate our insecurity. The realization of intimacy also gives deep contentment. Therefore, the sphere of intimacy should not be restricted; it should be expanded. However, one should not get so much entangled in it that the other dimensions of life are left unattended.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. - Mahatma Gandhi

While dealing with friends or close associates, we should keep in mind our obligations towards them. The relationships should also be infused with positivity. This will happen when we don't expect too much from others and also remain free from any prejudice. To estimate the importance of relations in life, George Eman Vaillant, an American psychiatrist and Professor at Harvard Medical School, conducted a survey on 268 students of the Harvard University. He concluded that in spite of professional success and physical fitness, a person cannot be happy, if he is in want of affectionate relations. The survey further revealed that happiness depends on two factors - the first being loved and the second, the ways and means to retain it.

Some jealous people try to create differences amongst friends. They do this to impede others'

progress. However, this is a distorted mentality, which does not benefit anyone. On the contrary, if efforts are made to reconcile, it would benefit us as well as others. This also fetches for us the cooperation of those whom we have helped.

Relations can never be sustained by bragging. For maintaining amicable relations, one should submit, endure and let others win. We can be victorious only by being 'defeated'. Though this appears anomalous, but it is true. In relations, the more we try to prove our superiority, press our rights and dominate, the more we move away from the hearts of others. Relations require amity, warmth, rapport, prudence, service, compassion and sympathy. The more one is prosperous in these virtues, the more he will succeed in maintaining harmony in all aspects of life.

The incident happened when Pandavs were very young. It happened during one of their dinner occasions. Generally the royal food consists of many dishes arranged in an order; i.e. each one of them has a specific place on the thali/plantain leaf.

One night, during the dinner, suddenly the lamps were blown off due to heavy winds. So everyone was asked to stop eating and wait till the lamps were lighted again (as it was a custom not to eat food in the dark.). All the children stopped eating except Bheema. He was unable to resist himself from eating; so by the time lights were lit his plate was almost empty. When asked by his mother Kunti 'How he was able to eat?' Bheema replied that 'as everything is in its specific place only, I've no problem in eating the things I wanted.'

This answer raised thinking in Arjuna. He thought if Bheema can eat with his perception of things even without light, why can't I shoot at the things in the dark because things would be in their place only. So he started practicing archery in the dark.

One day his guru Dronacharya observed it, and was stunned because he didn't teach this lesson. On learning about Arjuna's thinking he felt very happy at the interest of his disciple and his keen interest in archery.

This, out of the way of thinking / correlating every incident to his learning, of Arjuna made him the expert of Archery.

If you don't break your bonds while you're alive, do you think ghosts will do it after? - Kabir

The Unique Science of Mantras

“*Mananaat traayate iti mantrah*” (That is - Mantra is that whose contemplation saviors / protects.). A *mantra* is a unique combination of alphabets, which, when pronounced properly, is capable of pulsating, illuminating and agitating the world of consciousness. *Mantra vidya* (the science of *mantras*) can turn impossible into possible. The seemingly unachievable is easily achieved through this science. Persons who are familiar with the modes and methods of this *vidya* are capable of mending and bending the forces of nature at their will. They play games with the destiny; they change the fixed *karmic* currents of life and force them to flow in a desired direction. This is not hyperbole, but indeed a reality.

If someone starts looking for the literal meaning of a particular *mantra*, he may find it or he may not, because every *mantra* has been uniquely synthesized for a specific purpose. Wise people define *mantra* in the form of a sacred thought process. Their perception is that it is through *mantras* that the prayer is done to the specific deity with pure emotions and thoughts. Of course, definitions of *mantra* have their limitations and to exactly define *mantra* within these limitations is almost impossible. *Mantra* is multi-dimensional and no single definition can accommodate all the different dimensions of a *mantra*. Sometimes the

alphabets of a *mantra* are so structurally arranged as to reveal a meaning. But many times their arrangement pattern is so haphazard or nebulous that no meaning can be deciphered out of this.

Only the *mantravetta* (creator or visualizer of *mantra*) can give clear idea of the specific phonetic pattern of a *mantra* and its effect. In fact, the creators do not form a *mantra* with any particular meaning or thought in mind. They are simply engaged in relating the cosmic energy with a particular current and devising and developing a method of bearing it and its meaningful application. Not everyone can be a *mantra* creator. Even the highly intelligent are not able to do so. Only the one who has ascended to the highest level of *tapa sadhana* and whose vision is both subtle and all-encompassing can be the creator of *mantra*. The *mantravetta* is fully conversant with laws of cosmic energy and they have the ability to employ this energy towards a specific purpose. Hence whatever be the type of *mantra* - be it *vedic* or *puranic* or *tantric* - it is used in this very way.

The *mantravetta*, on the strength of his *sadhana* sees the different types of currents of the cosmic energy. Such energy currents are constantly flowing in our universe. A highly skilled

Purity of speech, mind, and senses; and a compassionate heart are needed by one who desires to rise to the divine platform. – Chanakya

engineer can see the different water levels under the earth's surface and is able to extract water from those depths by means of deep drilling and thick pipes. Similarly, the *mantravetta*, by establishing contacts with the different energy currents and employing them in specific way, creates *mantra*. The presiding deities of these *mantras*, called gods or goddesses, reveal the *mantras*. The *mantra* composition appears as a reflection of this divine revelation in the consciousness of the creator. We can also call it 'word personification' of *devashakti* (divine power). In the terminology of *mantra vidya* it is called the *mool mantra* (root *mantra*) of the deity.

Which aspect of this divine energy has to be sought and for what purpose it is to be used, determines the development of *mantras* for the deity. That is why, there could be many *mantras* associated with a particular god or goddess. For example, for 'Rahu' the *beej mantra* (root *mantra*), the *vedic mantra* and the *puranic mantra* are all different from each other. Their effects are also different. Each of these *mantras* is capable of the specific purpose associated with it. Some *mantras* are so powerful that their effects are visible as soon as their *japa* (recitation) is begun. *Beej mantras* are of this type. Their effect is instantaneous and of short duration. The effects of *Vedic mantras* are visible after a long time, but they also sustain for a longer duration.

The mechanism of *mantra's* working is novel. As the special sequence of its *sadhana* completes, it connects the inner consciousness of *sadhak* with the associated energy current of the

cosmos or the divine power. This is the first aspect of its functioning. The second aspect is that it makes the *sadhak's* being or personality adaptive to that energy current. The *mantra* not only impacts the *sadhak's* personality but also activates certain esoteric power centers hidden within him. These power centers are capable of receiving and bearing the incoming flow of subtle energy and employing them. The *mantra* is *siddha* (mastered) in this situation only.

Different *mantras* are selected for different *sadhakas*, and this selection is based on the individual characteristics of the *sadhak* and nature of the *mantra*. *Mantra sadhana* has its own methodology and process. For *mantra siddhi*, one has to attune one's life pattern in accordance with the nature of that particular *mantra*. Apart from right observance of the rules of *mantra sadhana*, the *sadhak* has to modify his diet, dress and conduct in keeping with the nature of the deity. For example, one has to adopt yellow eatables, yellow dress, yellow mat and yellow light for *sadhana* of the '*Bagalamukhi*' *mantra*. This *mantra* requires recitation with a rosary of yellow colored beads. Only then the *mantra* produces its desired effect. For the '*Chandra*' and '*Shukra*' *mantras*, the requirements are white items - white dress, white mat, white garland and white food items. Besides these, purity in conduct and behavior is essential.

Every *mantra* has its own distinct nature, and according to this nature they not only cast their different effects on the personality but also leave different individual impressions in the Nature. By the right application of a specific

Reshape yourself through the power of your will; never let yourself be degraded by self-will. The will is the only friend of the Self, and the will is the only enemy of the Self. – *Veda Vyasa*

aspect of the '*Surya*' *mantra* energy of the Sun can be tapped. This also leads to gradual reduction in the sun's temperature and consequent decrease in temperature on the earth. This experiment can cause great upheaval in Nature and environment. Such experiments have, indeed, been done by seers. Like the '*kundalini*' energy inside a person's body, the earth too has its own '*kundalini*' which emanates from the North Pole and reaches the South Pole. This '*kundalini*' too can be activated through *mantra sadhana* and this process also has been performed by the seers in the past.

Mantra utilizes nature's energy and also nurtures it. Some *tantric mantras* are so intense in their nature as to badly exploit nature's

energy. This causes great upheaval and imbalance in nature. Hence to counterbalance this effect other *mantras* have been devised which ensure that the nature continues to get replenishment. The *Gayatri mantra*, the *Mahamrityunjaya mantra* and the like come in the category of nourishing mantras. *Yagya* offerings performed with specific *mantras* also nurture and replenish the nature. The *sadhak* by mastering his *mantra* makes the impossible, possible; the incurable, curable and employs them as per his will and resolve. With the help of *mantra's* power he can treat not only his own but also other's incurable diseases. Hence one should select a *mantra* in keeping with one's characteristic nature and recite it with proper observance of associated rules.

One day, Guru Dronacharya organised a competition to test Pandavas and Kauravas princes. Across a stream he set up a small wooden bird on a tree. The bird was so small from where they were standing, but the boys were confident that they could pass the test. Yudhisthira, the oldest among them was called upon first. He crouched slightly and took his aim.

"What do you see there? Tell me everything you see there." ask Guru Drona to Yudhisthira.

Yudhisthira replied "I see a wooden bird, the branch and the tree. I can see leaves moving and even more birds sitting on the tree. I can see stream, grass, other trees, the sky..." and he named everything that met his eyes.

Drona spoke again "Put your bow down and take you seat, you cannot hit the bird." Yudhisthira silently walked back to his brothers, confused. Then, the next prince was called forward and Drona asked the same question to him again. He gave a similar answer, naming everything he could see. Once again, the boy was told to put down his bow. The same pattern continued with every boy that followed, until finally Drona reaching Arjuna.

Guru asked him "Tell me what you see there?"

"I can see only the eye of the bird" replied Arjuna

"Can you not see the trees and the stream?" asked Drona

Arjuna said "No sir, there is the eye of the bird. That's all I can see"

Drona was very pleased with the answer. He glanced at other boys, who seemed to have learned the lesson. Finally he permitted Arjuna to shoot. Arjuna shot at the eye of the wooden bird and the boys looked on in amazement at Arjuna. That was a perfect shot.

After a long pause, Dronacharya turned to the princes and said "Now you see young princes, that is the power of concentration"

**The world, like a dream full of attachments and aversions,
seems real until the awakening. - Adi Shankara**

The Round of Preparations – 3

The meetings of Theosophical Society (TS)

The weekly routine of study classes and meditation of TS was running smoothly. Every Sunday, *sadhaks* would gather at the residence of Jutsiji and discuss topics of philosophical interest. The essence of whatever was studied by the *sadhaks* individually on a specific topic in a week was shared with others in the weekly meeting. Once in a while there would be discussion on the current events. *Sadhaks* avoided talking about worldly matters and totally avoided talking politics. The weekly study class and meditation became almost regular in a short time. Later on this weekly program was conducted at the residence of other *sadhaks* also. Two such classes were held at the residence of Shriram. He liked all aspects of TS but didn't like its avoiding any interest in political events. He considered this to be shirking from responsibility. Once in a while, he tried to discuss the prevailing political situation in the country, but the volunteers of TS showed no interest.

It would have been understandable, had the members of TS not discussed such matters; but they were not ready even to listen. Once Shriram said firmly – “We avoid talking about the present and the future of our country. Why we forget that the founder of TS herself was a

political activist who inspired thousands of people to be proud of our country and the culture.”

A *sadhak* named Buddhi Vallabh opposed this view. He said – “Madam was capable of doing all that. Our power is limited. We cannot do all that.” Another member said – “We are *sadhaks*; we gather here for *sadhana*. We cannot discuss any politics here.”

Shriram said – “Whatever lakhs of revolutionaries are doing, is not a low-level politics. It is a struggle for regaining our lost dignity.”

The local head of TS, Jutsi, said – “It would be better Shriram if you also avoid talking such things; and concentrate on your spiritual development. The patriotic activities of Dr. Annie Besant are indeed worth following, but we are not capable of it.”

Opposition

Shriram was not expecting this answer. He got up and said – “We believe that spirits of seers living in the secret regions of Himalayas help us in every step. In spite of this faith, we are so weak. I feel that our faith itself is weak”. After a pause he said – “Without independence, no spiritual growth is possible. Its achievement

He who submits to discipline is a DISCIPLE. - Chinmayananda Saraswati

requires courage and resolute efforts; but what I am feeling is that we are trying to avoid even talking about it."

"Then what should be done?" – said Jutsiji. Shriram replied – 'I cannot be a member of such a weak community'; and he got out of the hall without even bothering to know the reaction of other members.

Disagreement with Mahatma Gandhi

Even after the end of the year 1934, Mahatma Gandhi didn't become as active in politics as he used to be earlier. In fact he ceased to be a formal volunteer of Congress. That year Gandhiji had done mass awakening for Harijan upliftment. Then he started talking about village upliftment. He asked the volunteers to work with *Charkha* (spinning wheel). His plea was, "Without the upliftment of villages, independence cannot be meaningful; those who wish to achieve full freedom should adopt *Charkha*". Gandhiji asked three years time for the popularization of *Charkha* and related village industries. In October 1934, in the Bombay Session of Congress, Gandhiji's proposal was accepted. The resolution of the establishment of 'Gramodyoga Sangh' was also passed. Though the resolution was passed, but many volunteers of the Congress were unhappy with this decision. They ridiculed Gandhiji and said with this pace it would take at least hundred years to attain freedom.

In 'Sainik' newspaper, Shriram too published a comment. He wrote – "Efforts for village upliftment should be made, but we should remain in active politics. If Gandhiji is keeping

aloof for three years, thousands of youth will be disappointed. Bapu should, at least, inspire these youths to remain in politics."

Shriram himself didn't take partial or full time renunciation from politics. He was working in his own way to give speed to the movement. There was negative reaction to the comments in 'Sainik' on Gandhiji's keeping away from active politics for three years. In fact, the volunteers were getting tired and they wanted to devote some time to reorganize their disturbed or ruined business. This declaration of Gandhiji was proving to be a boon for them. They were perturbed by the comments in 'Sainik' and wrote – "Is this newspaper – dedicated to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi – changing its direction?" Paliwalji too expressed almost a similar reaction. Shriram replied – "My reverence for Gandhiji has not diminished at all, but slackness may creep in the freedom movement by this decision. It was essential to underline this point."

Paliwalji asked – "Didn't Bapu think about that aspect? He takes any decision only after closely scrutinizing all the aspects."

Shriram said – "It's alright; but why should we neglect other aspects? If this assessment proves to be wrong, I will accept my mistake. I have no objection to it." Shriram knew that Paliwalji revered Mahatma Gandhi and that the points raised by him may appear bitter to him, but he stuck to his point fearlessly. Paliwalji patted his back and said – "We too should plan about the village upliftment. Think about it and tell me."

The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge spiritual progress. - Ramana Maharshi

Plan of adopting the village

There was no need for Shriram to think about it. He instantly replied as if he had already decided about it – “We should independently adopt one village and start two activities there: first, we should arrange for cleanliness of the village; and second, we should open one school there. Four-five volunteers should be sufficient for this purpose. Rest of the work can be taken care of by the local volunteers.”

In these few sentences, grassroots level work of Bapu’s village upliftment program was made clear. Paliwalji was very happy to know about this plan. He said – ‘Let us put forward this plan for approval in the next Sunday’s meeting. What do you think?’

Shriram nodded his head in agreement. Even then the volunteers’ anger due to his critical remarks on the decision of Mahatma Gandhi was not reduced. In that meeting members again protested vehemently. Paliwalji said – “The proposal of village upliftment that we are discussing has been suggested by Shriram himself. In spite of this, should we criticize him?”

Even after the persuasion of Paliwalji, some volunteers were still adamant and insisted that Shriram should apologize for his remarks and take his words back. The turn of Shriram came. As soon as he got up, some volunteers started making noise. Shriram spoke loudly – “Whatever I am going to speak, kindly listen to it patiently”.

They thought that Shriram was perhaps relenting; he would accept his mistake and then apologize for it. When the atmosphere calmed down, Shriram said – “You may be correct, but I too have the right to express myself according to my understanding. If you don’t want to give this much of freedom of expression, then I feel that the freedom for which we are fighting is nothing but a mirage. After removing the British, we want to impose our own dominion.....” His words were making an impact. People were listening to him attentively. He concluded his talk in the following words – “Even now, if you want me to beg pardon, I do so; not for my comments – written or said, but for my association with a group that is not ready to tolerate even a little disagreement. I will leave the Congress, but will not submit to wrong pressure.”

Senior volunteers like Paliwalji, Jagan Prasad Rawat, Gopal Pareek, etc were stunned. Paliwalji got up and said – “If Shriram leaves this movement, other volunteers will follow suit. Hence, we will place this point in front of Bapu.” Members present there didn’t expect this kind of answer and expression. They became silent.

Service of *Gram Devata*

There was a village called Karaval near Agra where hardly twenty –thirty families lived. Two families belonged to Brahmans and eight families belonged to Thakur community. The rest were from middle or backward classes. The total population was around two hundred fifty – three hundred. When, during a discussion with Paliwalji, Shriram was talking

A tree is like a saint. It calls no one to itself, nor does it send anyone away. It offers to protect everyone who wants to come to it, whether this be a man, a woman, a child, or an animal. - Anandamayi Ma

about adopting a village, he had this village in his mind. When the furore arising out of the remarks on Gandhiji's decision got subsided, a discussion on adopting the village was initiated. A call was given for five volunteers to come forward to take up the responsibility of upliftment of Karaval. There was pin-drop silence in the meeting, as if they had been bitten by a snake. Those who were arrogantly arguing over the remarks in 'Sainik' and trying to compel Shriram to apologize and take back his words - were also now keeping their mouths shut, as if they had no tongues.

Shriram said - "Four more volunteers are needed. Whether they are available or not, I will start my work from Deepawali". After this declaration, no one said anything. A volunteer named Kripanidhi said - "How can you manage alone the entire village?"

Paliwalji responded - "Some people should come forward to give him company. I believe, Shriram will be able to spare time for Karaval apart from his present responsibilities."

'Yes, Yes' - Shriram gave weight to Paliwalji's talk and said further - "Apart from working

for the newspaper, public meetings, freedom struggle and other tasks, I will devote three hours daily in Karaval. Though this time is insufficient, but I will prepare some local volunteers from the village itself."

"This will be alright." - Said Kripanidhi - "The volunteers should be trained from the village itself. I too am ready to devote three hours daily with Shriram. I should be able to spare that much time."

"Then what will happen to your shop?" - Asked Shriram humorously - "You will remember your shop while cleaning or teaching." The purpose of this question was also to know the alternate arrangements made at home while sparing time for village service. Carrying forward his talk, he again said - "After reaching the village, if you start remembering your shop and business, then your workload will also fall on my head."

Kripanidhi said - "No Baba! No! I will ask my elder son to take care the business and I will accompany you. If time permits, I can even remain there for the whole day."

You may control a mad elephant; You may shut the mouth of the bear and the tiger; Ride the lion and play with the cobra; By alchemy you may learn your livelihood; You may wander through the universe incognito; Make vassals of the gods; be ever youthful; You may walk in water and live in fire; But control of the mind is better and more difficult.

— *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. - Mahatma Gandhi

Steps toward Inner Peace

[From 1953 to 1981 a silver haired woman calling herself only "Peace Pilgrim" walked more than 25,000 miles on a personal pilgrimage for peace. She vowed to "**remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until given shelter and fasting until given food.**" In the course of her 28 year pilgrimage she touched the hearts, minds, and lives of thousands of individuals all across North America. Her message was both simple and profound. It continues to inspire people all over the world.

With this issue, we start serializing her wisdom pearls with the glad consent of publishers of her words – Friends of Peace Pilgrim. We are beginning with the summary of her 'Steps toward Inner Peace'. – Editor]

Four Preparations

1. Assume right attitude toward life

Stop being an escapist or a surface-liver as these attitudes can only cause inharmony in your life. Face life squarely and get down below the froth on its surface to discover its verities and realities. Solve the problems that life sets before you, and you will find that solving them contributes to your inner growth. Helping to solve collective problems contributes also to your growth, and these problems should never be avoided.

2. Live good beliefs.

The laws governing human conduct apply as rigidly as the law of gravity. Obedience

"Religion and science, in my analysis are the two great sister forces which have pulled, and are still pulling, mankind onward and upward....The impossibility of real science and real religion ever conflicting becomes evident when one examines the purpose of science and the purpose of religion. The purpose of science is to develop – without prejudice or preconception of any kind – knowledge of the facts, the laws and the processes of nature. The even more important task of religion, on the other hand, is to develop the consciences, the ideals and the aspirations of mankind."

- Robert Andrews Millikan

Winner of 1923 Nobel Prize in Physics

Curb your senses and your mind and see the Lord within your heart. - Adi Shankara

to these laws pushes us toward harmony; disobedience pushes us toward inharmony. Since many of these laws are already common belief, you can begin by putting into practice all the good things you believe. No life can be in harmony unless belief and practice are in harmony.

3. *Find your place in the Life Pattern.*

You have a part in the scheme of things. What that part is you can know only from within yourself. You can seek it in receptive silence. You can begin to live in accordance with it by doing all the good things you are motivated toward and giving these things priority in your life over all the superficial things that customarily occupy human lives.

4. *Simplify life to bring inner and outer well-being into harmony.*

Time is only an idea. There is only the Reality. Whatever you think it is, it looks like that. If you call it time, it is time. If you call it existence, it is existence, and so on. After calling it time, you divide it into days and nights, months, years, hours, minutes, etc. Time is immaterial for the Path of Knowledge. But some of these rules and discipline are good for beginners.”

- Ramana Maharshi

Unnecessary possessions are unnecessary burdens. Many lives are cluttered not only with unnecessary possessions but also with meaningless activities. Cluttered lives are out-of-harmony lives and require simplification. Wants and needs can become the same in a human life and, when this is accomplished, there will be a sense of harmony between inner and outer well-being. Such harmony is needful not only in the individual life but in the collective life too.

Four Purifications

1. *Purification of the bodily temple.*

Are you free from all bad habits? In your diet do you stress the vital foods - the fruits, whole grains, vegetables and nuts? Do you get to bed early and get enough sleep? Do you get plenty of fresh air, sunshine, exercise, and contact with nature? If you can answer “Yes” to all of these questions, you have gone a long way toward purification of the bodily temple.

2. *Purification of the thoughts.*

It is not enough to do right things and say right things. You must also *think* right things. Positive thoughts can be powerful influences for good. Negative thoughts can make you physically ill. Be sure there is no unpeaceful situation between yourself and any other human being, for only when you have ceased to harbor unkind thoughts can you attain inner harmony.

3. *Purification of the desires.*

Since you are here to get yourself into harmony with the laws that govern human

The birth as a human being is easy but it requires a great effort to be humane. - Acharya Shriram Sharma

conduct and with your part in the scheme of things, your desires should be focused in this direction.

4. *Purification of motives.*

Obviously your motive should never be greed or self-seeking, or the wish for self-glorification, you shouldn't even have the selfish motive of attaining inner peace for yourself. To be of service to your fellow humans must be your motive before your life can come into harmony.

Four Relinquishments

1. *Relinquishment of self-will.*

You have, or it's as though you have, *two selves*: the lower self that usually governs you selfishly, and the higher self which stands ready to use you gloriously. You must subordinate the lower self by refraining from doing the not-good things you are motivated toward, not suppressing them but transforming them so that the higher self can take over your life.

2. *Relinquishment of the feeling of separateness.*

All of us, all over the world, are cells in the body of humanity. You are not separate from your fellow humans, and you cannot find harmony for yourself alone. You can

only find harmony when you realize the oneness of all and work for the good of all.

3. *Relinquishment of attachments.*

Only when you have relinquished all attachments can you be really free. Material things are here for use, and anything you cannot relinquish when it has outlived its usefulness possesses you. You can only live in harmony with your fellow humans if you have no feeling that you possess them, and therefore do not try to run their lives.

4. *Relinquishment of all negative feelings.*

Work on relinquishing negative feelings. If you live in the present moment, which is really the only moment you have to live, you will be less apt to worry. If you realize that those who do mean things are psychologically ill, your feelings of anger will turn to feelings of pity. If you recognize that all of your inner hurts are caused by your own wrong actions or your own wrong reactions or your own wrong inaction, then you will stop hurting yourself.

Just as treasures are uncovered from the earth, so virtue appears from good deeds, and wisdom appears from a pure and peaceful mind. To walk safely through the maze of human life, one needs the light of wisdom and the guidance of virtue.

- Lord Buddha

The wise man should restrain his senses like the crane and accomplish his purpose with due knowledge of his place, time and ability. – Chanakya

How can These Temples of Education Become more Relevant?

Is the meaning of education limited to literacy or does it extend to being a means of earning livelihood or does it also refer to an innate potential that manages this multi-faceted life? This is the question not just from those who study and from those who teach but also from the intelligentsia in the society because all these parties end up getting disappointed after the student completes his education. When the student completes his education, neither is he confident of himself nor does he have the surety of getting a job.

The teachers think that they are teaching; but over the years, not only is the queue of unemployed people getting longer but also the quality of students is degrading. The parents are unable to be free from worry in spite of spending enormous amounts of money to educate their wards. The intelligentsia in the society is worried about the confused mind and the directionless life of the so-called educated people.

Education, both in its philosophical and practical sense is the means of providing all-round development. If primary education contributes to building our personality and lays the foundation for our life, higher studies lead us towards fulfillment of life. That is why it is very important that the syllabus for higher education be continuously upgraded. This perspective helps keep higher studies relevant and appropriate. It is difficult to chart the

course of present education using the maps of the past. It has become imminent to make changes to the philosophy and methodology associated with higher education to keep it in tandem with changing times.

If we look a little deeper into the present scenario, we see that many people end up being unemployed even after completing their higher studies. Except for a few subjects, majority of them are rarely connected to the realities of life. Change is required at two levels. The first aspect is to bring about innovation in academics as well as in teaching methods. The second aspect is to establish a connection between syllabus and real life. The subjects should have practical aspects and correlate to earning a livelihood. The curriculum should evolve along with needs of changing times and should compulsorily have something which will reflect the inner virtues of the students.

In most of the universities, the curriculum is quite outdated and there is a dire need to bring in changes that align it to the present times. Hence it is always important for academia to be closely associated with scholars, thinkers and experts in various fields. It is worthwhile to maintain equanimity across various schools of thought. Efforts should be continuously made to look for the livelihood aspect of a particular stream of education and keep it close-knitted. Then, it is possible that the

You will not be punished for your anger; you will be punished by your anger. – The Buddha

students become capable of a certain occupation while studying for it. The curriculum should be designed such that all the topics associated with the main subject are also made part of the course. For example, if translation, journalism and comparative studies are made part of Literature, then the employment perspective can also be strengthened.

Similarly, study of History can be made quite interesting and also lucrative with respect to employment. If culture is combined with information technology, new perspectives can be developed based on local surveys. The summary of all that we have discussed so far is to drive home the point that it has become even more essential for the present curriculum to be tuned to the future. Hence, new horizons should be explored and more possibilities unraveled.

The university system is a blend of both academic and administrative aspects. If they are able to move a little away from government and professional sectors and attain self-reliance, this in itself could be a great achievement for them. But, one thing that needs close consideration is to prevent making higher studies as something that belongs only to the elite. This would be totally against the common man. It is also not advisable for a university to be solely dependent on government. It is better to opt for a middle path.

To be able to achieve this, firstly, the atmosphere in the university should no longer be stifling and burdensome. Try to make it pleasant, aesthetic and thought-stimulating. Always appreciate teachers and students who

are prolific. They should also be told that it is an art to maintain decorum. An atmosphere of cooperation and friendship should prevail within the campus. This is possible when there is a feeling of family that is developed. Talented teachers can mold the students to have a vision. Hence brilliant teachers are those who evoke the true meaning of education. If these aspects are not given importance, it is as good as degrading the level of education.

The university campus should possess an inspiring atmosphere and imbibe a culture of study. This will go a long way in all-round development of both teachers and students. It's recommended that it be a blend of both traditional and modern thought. In the mad rush of modernity, it is not good to ignore the eternal school of thought and the ancient literature. It is the same if we keep singing the glories of the past and miss out on what is happening today. However, we cannot ignore our heritage. The need of the hour is the seamless synthesis of the ancient and the modern.

The fine balance between understanding the essence of our traditions in its true light and accepting the present school of thought will go a long way in making higher education and the universities more effective. The universities should be bubbling with both discussions and conversations on all topics – traditional and modern. Inquisitiveness towards what is the state of art is what will keep the universities relevant. The novelty of thought, cooperation, industriousness, experimental nature, open-mindedness and amity not only help a person with higher studies, but also equips him to face all challenges in life.

Carefulness in speech consists in avoiding slanderous, ridiculous, harsh, critical, boastful and meaningless talk. These bring good neither to oneself nor to others. – Mahavira

Golden Refinement of Personality through Tapa - II

(Translation of a discourse given by Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya on the topic “*Tapakar Kundan Banane ki Prakriyā?*” - continued from the previous issue)

Friends,

As you know, despite having individual and independent identities, all the sense-organs function as per the desires, impulses and instructions of the mind. If you succeed in restraining its passions for the greed of the tongue and carnal pleasures, it will be easy for you to have excellent control over all important faculties of your mind-body system. Let me repeat that *Swādhyāya* and *Satsang*¹ will provide immense support in this endeavor.

Swādhyāya and *Satsang* will help positive orientation of your thoughts and tendencies. *Swādhyāya* will enlighten your mind, generate constructive thoughts and sow the seeds of wisdom. *Satsang* will inspire and nurture your courage and willpower. Thus, gradually you will find it easier to convince and control your mind. You would also be able to focus its agility on some worthy subject or activity. This self-discipline is an essential pre-requisite, as well as a key to self-refinement and illumined ascent.

Time - Management:

Another important facet of distinct development of personality, and luminous

progress in life is — discipline and prudent use of time. This is the most precious of the resources gifted to you by the Almighty. If you pay a little attention, you will realize that “time is life and life is time”. With every passing moment, you are losing a fraction of your life (span). So, if you care for your life, you must care not to waste time in lethargy, or haphazard, mindless activities (even if they appear joyful and attractive). If you aspire to refine your personality, and improve your status, you should seriously care for time-discipline and time-management.

Look at the lives of great personalities in any field of life; you will find one thing in common that — they could attain distinguished talents and accomplish incredible deeds by efficient discipline and management of their time. They made best possible and constructive use of every minute in the routine as well as extraordinary circumstances.

You might have heard of Acharya Vinoba Bhave. This great associate of Mahatma Gandhi was a saintly social reformer. Right from his childhood he was keen to help the needy. He was also a prolific reader and scholar. He used

Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening. - Mahatma Gandhi

to make prudent schedule of his daily activities as per the circumstances and the tasks in hand. He sincerely engaged every moment of his time in studies and social service. Do you know? He had mastered as many as twenty-three languages! He accomplished many feats of philanthropic activities and social awareness programs of national development service. In particular his *Bhūdāna* Movement² continues to stand as a shining example in Indian history. He traversed thousands of miles on foot as part of this movement. During the short sojourns in between too, he used to find time for his regular reading/writing and *sādhana*s.

Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States of America. His tenure as president of USA is glorified for several far-reaching liberal policies and propagation of equality and human rights, etc. He was also very popular for his punctuality. It is said that people in and around his office used to set their clocks according to his regular schedule. His domestic staff and friends too used to identify time according to his time of going for morning stroll, breakfast, etc. He truly regarded and used every moment of life as precious, and gradually accomplished successively higher goals despite his humble family background. Indeed, the secret of great achievements lies in optimal management of the invaluable resource of time.

But you should not forget that 'optimal' management of time requires clear vision, and understanding of the task at hand. This together with thoughtful approach and focused diligence makes it optimal.

Diligence and Efficiency:

The potentials of your mind and body are invaluable assets. You must use them efficiently, and constantly make an effort to augment them. But note that, hard-work or laborious effort, however rigorous it might be, would not lead to worthy success unless your mind is focused on the task at hand and takes interest in it. Every effort, every task, even if it be a sundry activity, becomes attractive/artistic and bears a sense of completeness, if it is done with mental engrossment. Half-hearted efforts hardly succeed. Work done sans mental concentration and interest is always crude or of lower quality, as compared to the same work completed with due focus, determination, and joyful involvement of mind.

Have you ever seen the nest of a *Baya* (weaver bird or tailor bird)? It is so artistic that it is also displayed in some natural art-exhibitions; people hang it in their balconies or living rooms as a decorative piece. The bird thoroughly searches for fine quality of grass-straws, peels it to take out the wood-threads, and meticulously 'knits' a tight and strong nest for its family. Its mental concentration in this laborious task is no less than that of an artist fully engrossed in his best creation. The size, design, and finishing of the nest is so perfect that it makes one wonder whether it is a machine-made model! The nest is so stout that even stormy winds can't tear it off.

On the contrary, look at the way a pigeon prepares its 'nest'! It arbitrarily brings some wood straws from the surroundings and

Learn to give, give in plenty, give with love, give without any expectation; one does not lose anything by giving; on the other hand you get back a thousand fold. – Sivananda

spreads it at any place above certain height, which is closed from at least one side. This haphazardly made 'nest' is easily destroyed and falls down by a fast current of breeze or mild rainfall. This is why the lazy bird tries to make it in a corner of an unoccupied building, or ruins. A crow's nest is also made half-heartedly on tall trees. Its chicks are vulnerable to fall and get drenched in rain, whereas *Baya's* chicks enjoy rainfalls, chill of winter, and heat of summer, as they remain protected from all these hazards inside their well-structured, strong house (nest). This drastic difference in the quality and value of works done with and without mental concentration can be seen in every walk of life. You must realize it. Your hard-labor, your diligence would give best outputs only if the task is completed on time, and is done with due attention.

Learn to enjoy the work at hand. Get rid of all your lethargy and habits of delaying the work. Sincerely identify and try to overcome your shortcomings, refine your skills/abilities to improve the quality of your work. Convince your mind that the quality of every work done by you, irrespective of whether it is small or big task, routine or new and challenging, affects your self-esteem.

Disciplined Use of Worldly Resources:

In the present era of materialistic life, money, wealth or property is most prominent and sought-for among the worldly resources. It has been a general observation that with increased income or wealth one begins to accumulate more comforts and tends to spend more. Thus, for most people, no amount of wealth or

worldly resources is adequate; as a result, they keep running to earn or grab more of it. Is this what you regard as progress? What for? Will it ever give you desired contented and happiness? No, never.

You should be self-dependent, you should earn your livelihood honestly; there is no restriction on creating wealth by honest means. But you should always restrain your expenditures; keep strict vigilance, and discipline your consumptions and possession / accumulation of comforts. Else, all your life, your talents, your potentials will be fueled in the blind race for more and more luxuries, pompous show-off, glamorous life-style, worldly status and what not. You will have no time for yourself; no true friends and well-wishers, no peace of mind, no lasting happiness. There will be high risk of varieties of addictions, thefts, stresses, and health-disorders. Addictions not only drain out your health, but also squeeze out your vital energy; these are like slow poisons that destroy your mental and physical health.

Glitter of luxury and pompous show-off buys you nobody's true respect; it gives you nothing in reality but more of jealousy of your so-called friends and associates. Moreover, gorgeous life-style, parties, and glamorous life-style spread negative trends in the society, attract and mislead many others towards grabbing money even by wrong means and thus nurture corruption in the society. This way, cravings for luxuries and 'high' worldly status, and extravaganza are not only hazardous but also sinful.

(An) individual should alter his (faulty) habits with the help of his judgment. One should adopt right habits and practice what one preaches. - Samarth Ramdas

Remember that irrespective of whether one has inherited or self-earned property and wealth, in either case, it is earned through direct or indirect contributions of many others. It should not be consumed for personal luxury and extravagance of the owner or his family. One owes to repay it to the society. Therefore wealth/property should be always used for philanthropic and far-sighted constructive projects that contribute to progressive development of the society as a whole.

I would again like to remind you that the dignity and status of a person lies not so much in his life-style or worldly possessions and recognitions, but in his thoughts, character, and deeds. It is not the amount of one's income or property, but the manner and purpose in which he spends his earnings that signifies one's intelligence and maturity. For example, even a dullard can possess enormous riches through inheritance or through winning a lottery, etc. But he will need wisdom, vision, and maturity to protect, invest, and constructively use this wealth.

Let me also warn you that miserliness and accumulation of wealth for future generations is no better than extravagance. This will also be stressful, as you will constantly keep guarding it and attempt its constant growth. Best way to help the future generations is to educate your children and train them so that they can live a dignified life independently, rather than ditching them into lethargy and addictions with the 'granted support' of your property and wealth.

If you truly desire to have lasting peace of mind, awaken the sainthood hidden in your inner self. If you aspire to progress with dignity and unalloyed joy, you should learn to adopt the principle of "Simple Living, High Thinking". Try to live like the average person of the society. For example in India, if about seventy percent of the fellow Indians live a comfortless life, why can't you observe a modest life-style? Why can't you save your money, time and other resources for constructive efforts of social welfare? Your simple living and high thinking will inspire many others.

Look, for example, at the life of immortal social reformers like Iswarchandra Vidyasagar! This preeminent scholar was a professor in a prestigious college of Kolkata and used to get highly paid even under the British regime in India. Out of the salary of rupees five hundred per month in those days, he used to take only up to rupees fifty for him and his family. From the remaining four-hundred and fifty rupees he used to help the needy students by distributing scholarships, books and other necessary things. With simple living, you will not only be able to protect your honesty and integrity but also save a lot of your earnings and other resources. Use them wisely for some good cause. Goodwill and positivity thus earned and expanded would be more valuable and powerful than wealth and status.

The *tapas*³ we discussed so far are essential facets of personality refinement and progress. But all these would be possible only if you have control over your thoughts. The most

**This world would be Heaven if we practice what we preach to
our children. – Acharya Shriram Sharma**

important of *tapas* is therefore the thought-control (*Vichāra Sāmyam*).

Thought-Management:

The power of thoughts is unlimited. Indeed it is thoughts that make human species the crown prince on earth of the Almighty Creator. The most powerful entity in human life is thought-power. You may have the illusion that it is wealth or worldly attainments and status. But, in reality, it is the power of thoughts that is supreme. All your endeavors of personality refinement, illumined progress in worldly life, and spiritual enlightenment would be successful if you learn to control and positively orient your thoughts. If you focus them on the task at hand, on specific topic, or quest, your thoughts would work like the arrow of Arjuna that used to always pierce the aimed target without any perturbation. Don't let your thoughts wander like stray dogs. Learn to focus them on a chosen topic or point worth pondering over, as scholarly thinkers, writers, and scientists do. Sagacious thinkers can find solution to any problem of human life; solution to any puzzle, riddle, or mystery is beyond the grasp of their minds if they start thinking in the relevant direction.

Most of us do not realize the power of thoughts, because often our thoughts are arbitrary, superficial, and wandering, driven by our emotional instinct and mental agility. If a small amount of explosive powder is spread here and there it would be swept away by winds or brooms like dust particles, but if the same amount is poured into a gun, it can forcefully explode and destroy the targeted object. Sunrays are naturally spread all around during day time. If you focus even some of them at a point with the help of a convex lens, you will see that they would light fire at that point. This is the power of focused energy. Your mind is a capacitor of enormous energy; thoughts are the tools by which you could use this energy for any desired purpose provided you have control over your thoughts. Keep strict vigilance over your thoughts. Keep an 'army' of good, positive, rational (reasoned), and constructive thoughts, ready to counter the evil (vicious), negative, haphazard, destructive thoughts (that keep arising as per your intrinsic tendencies, habits, and circumstantial influences/disturbances). If you could do so, I will call you an ascetic, a sagacious master in making. Your thoughts

"The chief beauty about time is that you cannot waste it in advance. The next year, the next day, the next hour are lying ready for you, as perfect, as unspoiled, as if you had never wasted or misapplied a single moment in all your life. You can turn over a new leaf every hour if you choose."

- Arnold Bennett

**The great are strongest when they stand alone; a God-given might
of being is their force. – Sri Aurobindo**

focused in the light of wisdom will help in refining, transforming and illuminating your personality, and also sharpen your intellect and mental focus.

Again, I would like to tell you that the purpose of your participation in this *sādhana* session will be served only if you sincerely observe the *tapas* of self-restrain (over sense-organs including mind), high integrity (of character), sincerity, assiduity, diligence and efficiency of work, punctuality and far-sighted use of time, and righteous and constructive management of thoughts. These *tapas* will refine, develop, and lead your life to glorious realms of dignity, eminence, and bliss. I wish you all the success in this great endeavor.

|| *Om Shanti* ||

Notes:

1. *Swādhyāya*: Self-study and self-training in the light of sagacious thoughts and teachings of elevated souls. *Satsang*: Attending enlightening discourses, discussions; being in the company of great personalities.
2. *Bhūdāna* Movement: Movement to inspire/demand gifting of over fifty million acres of land by the land-lords to the landless. This movement was initiated and successfully completed under the adept leadership of Acharya Vinoba Bhave in many parts of India.
3. *Tapa*: Self-determined devout endeavor of self-discipline.

Divine India Youth Association (DIYA)

DIYA is a youth group of All World Gayatri Pariwar leading a movement to create a spiritually strong and prosperous India. It is based on the holistic development of youth through motivation, training and nurturing and then harnessing their innate potential for the development of society and the nation at large. Though initially meant for school- and college-going students, anyone, irrespective of caste and religion, feeling young at heart may join this movement. By joining it, you will grow and also help others grow.

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**In a day, when you don't come across any problems - you can be sure that
you are travelling in a wrong path. – Swami Vivekananda**